

Femmo Fatales

January

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THE WOMEN OF
"MARS ATTACKS"

KRISTA ALLEN
"EMMANUELLE"

"THE CROW'S"
SOPHIA SHINAS

"THE CROW II'S"
THUY TRANG

DRIVE-IN DIVA
LYNN LOWERY

ATHENA MASSEY

E
L
V
I
R
A

Cassandra Petersen as
Lady El, making her
Mistress of the Dark a
merchandising bonanza.

THE SEXY SIRENS OF SURRENDER CINEMA

Volume 5 Number 7



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Start with our next issue (shown right), a cover story on '50s blonde bombshell Mamie Van Doren, the drive-in diva who patented the bullet bra. Van Doren provides a torrid chronicle of making her classically camp B-movies. She drew fire from the Catholic Church in *THE PRIVATE LIVES OF ADAM AND EVE*. In MST3000 fave *GIRLS' TOWN* she sang in the shower, but the church insisted on the scene's removal. And Van Doren dishes dirt on Jayne Mansfield and even Doris Day, who she describes as "a gold-plated bitch!" We think you'll agree, this one's a keeper!

Plus, in the same issue, Neve Campbell (of *THE CRAFT*) talks about starring for Wes Craven in a new shocker called *SCREAM*, Sarah Jessica Parker on working with Tim Burton on *MARS ATTACKS!*, and much more! Subscribe today and pick up those back issues you may have missed.

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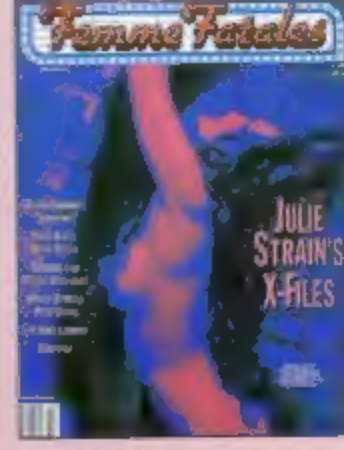
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Femme Fatales

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The Luscious Ladies of Horror, Fantasy & Science Fiction

JANUARY 1997

It's official. *FF* is a monthly publication. We're smokin'. I attribute this more expedient turnout to our publisher, a Dickensian taskmaster named Fred Clarke. Lest anyone think I'm kissing-up, Clarke wields a whip (not necessarily a metaphor, here) and bites at your butt like a starved barracuda. The bottom line: Mr. "Mean Machine" and his disciplinary tactics have augmented production. Another thing, Clarke is an honest man. While the fan rags try to limp into a self-delusory existence by juicing the books, Mr. Clarke has turned *Cinefantastique* into a legend—and *FF* into a reality—as a result of his credibility. What a guy!

Latest developments: Krista Allen—among the femmes fatales profiled this issue (page 48)—vowed to graduate from her *EMMANUELLE* movie to "more challenging roles." Only a couple of weeks after wrapping her *FF* interview, Allen was hired to replace Lisa Ripna, who defected to *MELROSE PLACE*, as "Billie" in the daytime soap, *DAYS OF OUR LIVES*.

Like to introduce you to a couple of new staffers. Duane Polcou served as unit photographer for an independent film titled *BEYOND THE BRINK OF MADNESS*; his images are champagne, devoid of cheesiness that lesser artists grind into a softcore platter. Check it out, next ish. Most of the "Fatale Attractions" were researched by indefatigable cub reporter Jason D. Sechrest, whose sources—next issue—will enlighten you to HBO's *PERVERSIONS OF SCIENCE*, an exotic sci-fi series which won't debut until mid-'97 (page 5).

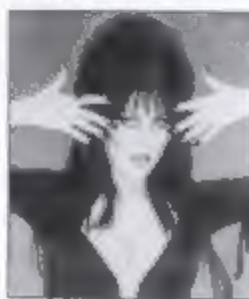
Amelia Kinkade will be among the guests attending New York's *Fangoria* convention (Jan. 4 & 5, Hotel Pennsylvania—across the street from Madison Square Garden); *FF* staffers Jennifer Huss and Stacey Linde will also be sharing a table. Ms. Kinkade, Athena Massey (page 38) and Nikki Fritz will convene at *Fangoria*'s L.A. convention (Dec. 7 & 8, Airport Hilton). You still here?—Start packing!

Finally, we're returning to L.A. Producers of a fantasy film, currently in production, have requested *FF* to cast "ten-femmes, identified with the genre, in cameo appearances." We aim to please!

Bill George



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The Women of MARS ATTACKS!

SARAH JESSICA PARKER KIDNAPPED BY ALIENS! HER STORY ABOUT THE INVASION:

By ARTHUR JEFFERSON

"She is sort of shallow," admits Sarah Jessica Parker in regard to her characterization of Gen-X reporter, Nathalie West. "I think she doesn't even realize the significance of the Martian invasion. I think she just finds it odd and freakish and kind of gross."

Parker acquiesced to per-

from the L.A. stages of Warner Hollywood Studios to Washington D.C. for exterior shots of historic sites. Casino interiors were accessible on the Las Vegas Strip, where cabaret entertainer Tom Jones, cast as himself, insists—a global catastrophe, notwithstanding—"The show's gotta go on!" Kansas countryside served as the setting for scenes that bond Grandma and Richie Norris (Sylvia Sidney and Lukas Haas) in a feud against the martians. The film wrapped in Kingman, Arizona, its red rock desert selected as the site of the original alien landing.

"Scheduling became a little bit complicated because the movie was delayed," relates Parker, "and then, once I read the script, it

was...odd!"

So what was the catalyst behind the film's lavish (reportedly \$70 million) budget? "The film is a dramatization of the *Mars Attacks!* trading cards," notes a Warner Bros. executive. "The cards, issued during the height of the Cold War [1962] by the Brooklyn-based Topps Chewing Company, depicted an H.G. Wells-style invasion of earth by martians. Due to the graphic [i.e. violent] nature of some of their images, the *Mars Attacks!* cards were never distributed nationally and were pulled from the market after only a few months." [*The censorship chronicle of the Mars Attacks! cards is documented in the FF 4:6 cover story.*]

"In 1994, Topps reissued

Love hurts: Sarah Jessica Parker (literally) gets Michael J. Fox's hand when he's blasted by martian artillery. Parker "sort of survives" her alien abduction.



Mars Needs Women! Showgirls, cast in casino scenes w/ Danny DeVito & Tom Jones, are on the martian menu.

the set, which quickly sold out. Five hugely successful *Mars Attacks!* comic books, published by Topps Comics in 1994, also demonstrated the growing popularity of the property."

The controversial cards gruesomely rendered both sexes as gutted or parboiled victims of human genocide. Women were either wrapped in the arms of martians, whose peeled craniums exposed pulsing brains, or locked in the mandibles of oversize insects. But it's likely the principle female players of Warner Bros.' *MARS ATTACKS!* will lose the vulnerability streak. Topps' executive editor, Dwight Jon Zimmerman, is quite enamored with Jonathan Gems' script. Denying the epic is a "hardware movie", Zimmerman concedes "...it's very much a special effects movie but with first class talent. Director Tim Burton is the magnet for attracting stars

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One of the martian invaders, created by Industrial Light & Magic (JURASSIC PARK), bones-up on biology.

form in *MARS ATTACKS!*, without any enlightenment about her character nor reading the script, because the film afforded a reunion with her ED WOOD director, Tim Burton: "I love working for Tim. He's been a wonderful director, and I felt very flattered and very honored to be asked to work with him again. It's exciting to be part of the composition that he's creating."

Location photography for *MARS ATTACKS!* traversed



ATTRACTIONS F A T A L E

●Elvira, this issue's cover woman, relates in her profile that she defected from Coors to launch her own brew. So who's substituting as Coors' "Queen of Halloween"? None other than *FF* (4:8) cover woman Pamela Anderson Lee; however, though the *BAYWATCH* bombshell is posing for cardboard standees, she "will not be featured in television commercials."

●HBO is producing an anthology series, scheduled to debut next year, titled *PERVERSIONS OF SCIENCE*. Heather Elizabeth Parkhurst (*FF* 5:4) plays a plum role in an episode directed by William Shatner. Another episode offers Elizabeth Berkley (*SHOW-GIRLS*) as the literal embodiment of a black widow. Directed by Tobe Hooper, cable queen Kira Reed (*RED SHOE DIARIES*, *MADAME WINSTON'S SECRETS*) was initiated into the series "as a vampiress, complete with a low-cut, Elvira type of dress. I look like Betty Boop with fangs." Reed also shot an episode of Showtime's *WOMEN* that similarly stressed a sci-fi theme: "I played a medical student who builds an 'orgasmotron'; the machine helps a friend to have her first orgasm. It's the kind of role where I say, 'Well, if you're not going to try it, I'll show you how it's done!'—and then I jump on the thing, myself. I've been doing some sexy stuff, and I have to admit that I love it. With this *PERVERSIONS OF SCIENCE* thing, I had my clothes on the entire time—and I started itchin'!"

●The Ministry of Film and London Night Studios are preparing to debut *Embrace*, their first comic book title under the joint venture they formed earlier this year. A Ministry spokesperson notes, "*Embrace* will be written by Everette Hartsoe, CEO and creator of London Night Studios, and drawn by Stephen Sandoval, L.A.-based art director and illustrator of *Razor*, London Night's top-selling title. The flesh and blood inspiration for *Embrace* is found in the luscious form of Carmen Electra, whose likeness is the basis for the comic book's main character."

"Carmen, who will release her second solo album by Christmas, has been featured as a singer and dancer in a host of television specials and music videos, including *SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIAL*, *BAYWATCH NIGHTS*, ABC's *IN CONCERT WITH PRINCE* and the 1996 MTV Music Awards. Most recently, she has been a regular guest co-host for *ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT*."

"Like her comic book alter ego, Carmen exudes a high-spirited, playful eroticism matched by her skills in the fields of dance and music. Similarly, *Embrace* is a sexy yet somewhat naive go-go dancer at Club Nightshade who is initially unaware of her true nature: she is a vampire. But not a 'garden variety' bloodsucker; she's a Necrothorpe, the last heir to the throne of an extinct race of vampires..."

Incidentally, The Ministry of Film "has the rights to develop London Night Studios' comic book titles, characters and properties into feature films, television and other ancillary business." *SHERMAN OAKS*' Heather Elizabeth Parkhurst has been cast as the live-action counterpart of London Night's *Tommy Gunn* ("They signed me on the spot after reading my profile in



Christina Lydon, co-producer/co-host of *BLACK BELT & POWERLIFTER* video mags, stars as *AMAZON WARRIOR*.

FF 5:4."). Vanessa Taylor, featured in *FF* 5:3 and profiled in this issue (page 32), has "signed-on" to portray *Razor*. We'll expand this "exclusive" in a forthcoming cover story.

●Her lack of screen visibility has fueled speculation; is Denice Duff slipping into retirement? Ms. Duff, profiled in *FF* 2:4, is often linked to the fantasy genre as a result of her roles in *SUBSPECIES II & III*, *RETURN TO FROGTOWN*, etc. A beguiling beauty, Duff's credibility as an actress advanced the likelihood she'd land significant roles. But one insider is dismissing "all the idle gossip about retirement. Right now, Denice is living in San Fernando Valley with her husband [a Chalk Farm musician] and having babies. She's simply taken a sabbatical at the moment."

●Slipping out of retirement, Michelle Bauer plunged into *MAXIMUM SECURITY* for director Fred Olen Ray. "For Michelle and I to be working with each other again, after all these years, was just like a hand in a glove," grins Ray. "We hadn't missed a beat. She's still the same Michelle. She had always said that if she ever came back, her first film would be for me—and that's the way it was." The movie prompted another reunion; Bauer and her *ATTACK OF THE 60 FOOT CENTER-FOLD* co-star, John LaZar, portray terrorists "who have taken over an airliner by holding hostages. In

the interim, a couple of guys get wounded and Michelle is fatally shot in the stomach."

Hot on the comeback trail, Bauer was also cast in a feature-length *RED SHOE DIARIES* spin-off, *MEN IN HEELS*, *WOMEN IN SPIKES*. "I'm featured in a segment called 'The Shape,'" relates the actress. "I play a shameful homemaker who's compelled to confess her shame. I'm a prudish person who's developing breasts, and I can't accept it. It's a real interesting part."

●Bauer's frequent director, the aforementioned Mr. Ray, has a full plate. Upon wrapping *MAXIMUM SECURITY*, he'll direct a sci-fi shoot-'em-up titled *RABID ASSAULT*; a submarine is the central setting of the film, which stars Erika Nann (*MIND TWISTER*, *NIGHT RHYTHMS*). A sequel to his *INVISIBLE MOM* is in development, but Ray has declined to proceed with a couple of other proposed sequels. One casualty is *THE HAUNTING FEAR II*. Brinke Stevens, who starred in the precursor, wrote the sequel's screenplay. The scenario: It turns out that the adulterous Lisa (originally played by Delia Sheppard), apparently slain in the 1990 release, suffered only flesh wounds. Recovering from plastic surgery, Lisa's vanity is a catalyst for vindication; she's determined to murder her assailant, Victoria (Stevens), the timid homemaker whom Lisa had literally driven insane. But Victoria has sunk into amnesia—

Well, anyway, why has Ray resisted an adaptation of the story? "I read the script, and thought it was very well written," replies Ray. "But I'm not so sure about the marketability of it, based on the original picture. *THE HAUNTING FEAR* just didn't make a big enough splash to go out and raise money to make another one."

Another sequel on the back burner is *JACK-O, PART II*. Ray, who produced the initial film, had intended to cast the subsequent installment with a bevy of B-Queens. "One problem," he comments through a blast of cigar smoke, "—the original company, Triboro, came to us with the script but didn't come through with the money. The possibility of shooting it is still there, but it has to be geared for a Halloween release. Since the company that gave us the script was also the company that proposed the budget, we'd have to write another script and look towards another budget. I'm not sure what will happen with it."

●Submarines appear to be this year's in-mode of sci-fi transport. Steve Latshaw, who directed *JACK-O*, has organized Templar Pictures to produce *THE TERROR BENEATH*; this one's about an alien that stalks sub passengers. Latshaw is also prepping *ASTROKIDZ*, "a family sci-fi adventure."

●Producer/director Jim Wynorski describes his current project, *THE ASSAULT*, as "THE ALAMO with chicks." Let's expand that premise a bit: A militia of armed assassins are in pursuit of an informant, who's low on ammo; the unlucky bystander finds sanctuary in a halfway house for women, all of whom just happen to be drop-dead gorgeous. The cast includes two *FF* cover women—Lydie Denier (2:3) and Cristiva Turner

(5:5)—and reunites Melissa Branselle (THE WASP WOMAN) with Peggy Trentini (FF 4:2), both of whom appeared together in Wynorski's DEMOLITION HIGH ("Kinda like DIE HARD in a high school"); the latter shoot-'em-up, which may debut in the U.S. by the end of the year, is already a hit in Europe. The result: a sequel, DEMOLITION U ("Kinda like DEMOLITION HIGH goes to college"), will be cast in the fall.

Other projects on Wynorski's slate include "a sexy sci-fi actioner" titled STORM TROOPERS ("It's THE TERMINATOR meets PULP FICTION"); Shannon Tweed is a likely candidate for a pivotal role, but casting has not yet been confirmed. Wynorski is also probing the possibility of a VAMPIRELLA TV series.

● Jackson Film Entertainment, officiated by producer/director Donald G. Jackson, is cranking out two films per month. Management is in post-production on PIRATS OF HOLLYWOOD (yes, pirates). "It's a really whacky time warp story about pirates who got lost in Hollywood," says Jackson. The film is a launching pad for sexy newcomers, Tina Higerada and Carla Moon.

Jackson is also applying finishing touches to GHOST TAXI: "It's about a taxi driver [TOAD WARRIOR's Scott Shaw] who perishes in a car accident sometime in 1962. He's tormented in Hell for 34 years until Satan negotiates for his freedom; the driver may return to earth, but he must find 13 souls ripe for eternal damnation. If he accomplishes the mission, within one evening, he'll be granted a mortal life in L.A." You call that a deal? Anyway, Fred Olen Ray performs a cameo (hey, he did a nice job in NAKED OBSESSION).

● Dennis Davine is directing AMAZON WARRIOR, "the story of a woman's quest to avenge the destruction of her people." Christine Lydon, co-producer/co-host of POWERLIFTER and BLACK BELT video magazines, tackles the role of pumped gladiator. "The characters I portray in film have been intelligent women who boast, both, inner and outer strength," says Lydon. "It is my firm belief that 'feminine' and 'muscular' need not be contradictory terms, and there's no better place to send that message than the silver screen." She's supported in the film by J.J. Rodgers (SISTERS OF SIN).

● The original BAD SEED, Patty McCormack, reprises her role as "the better half from hell" in MOMMY 2: MOMMY'S DAY. Brinke Stevens, who also endorses, claims "the script is a lot more complex and interesting than the first movie. Nothing is what it seems, and everyone has a duplicitous nature. We shot the movie in Iowa." The film is written and directed by Max Allan Collins, was has tailored a screenplay for Stevens titled DEADLY DISHES; this one's a TRUCKSTOP HOOKERS FROM HELL gambit that would cast Stevens as a "professor of urban legends." There's just one



Erotic anime icon, LE BLUE GIRL (aka Miko Mido, ♀), tantalizes the appetite of The Shikima, a sex-starved "colony of demons".



drawback; though Collins and Stevens have struck a distribution deal, they need \$300,000 to finance the film. Anyone with the spare change is advised to contact Ms. Stevens.

Ah, just one more thing. Serving as her own co-producer, Stevens is casting herself and FF cover woman Barbara Leigh (4:3) in MIDNIGHT: SHADE OF BLACK. The thriller is written by Sean O'Bannon, who previously penned NIGHT SHADE.

Finally, enough with the cards and letters inquiring about the debut date of HYBRID (pre-viewed in FF 5:2). It's official; the sci-fi film, which unites Stevens with J.J. North, premieres in November.

● Four grisly tales are spun from HELLBLOCK 13, a haunted lookup within an abandoned women's penitentiary. The Crimson Production, directed by Paul Talbot (FREAKSHOW), offers a slightly eclectic cast of "mutated fish babies, deranged heroine addicts, zombie biker gangs and redneck 'trailer camp' mutants." So what's a nice girl like J.J. North doing in a film like this? "J.J. stars as a biker girl in one of the film's episodes," explains Talbot. "Hopefully, it will be a little bit different from what most of her fans have seen; she plays a tough, real badass character."

Ms. North is equally badass, as a psychopathic sibling, in BEYOND THE BRINK OF MADNESS. "My character is entirely angst-driven," enthuses North. "She flips out, she murders. She's not impulsively cruel, there are dramatic scenes—including a rape and an abusive history—that foreshadow her mental deterioration." Oscillating to slapstick, North signed-up for VICE ACADEMY 5 as "a CD siren, named Heidi, who bursts out of a virtual reality game. Experiencing non-electronic reality, she starts flirting with a computer nerd." J.J. is one busy actress

● Tracy Scoggins (FF 2:3), former LOIS AND

CLARK vixen, is locked within her own virtual reality via SNOW JOB, an interactive CD-game that 3DO recently premiered. "The player is embodied by a former police detective. Scoggins, who plays your ex-lover, is suspected of murder. Basically, you're in charge of solving the mystery," explains 3DO exec Tuesday Uhlund. "It's depicted within a 2-dimensional world, but it's all done with real objects. There's no animation."

● Back in FF 5:3, we previewed Westwood Studio's adaptation of BLADE RUNNER into a CD-game. Well, the interactive epic's debut has been postponed until next year. Meanwhile, Westwood is expediting production of LANDS OF LORE 2, GUARDIANS OF DESTINY. "We just spent a week working with actress Page Roland," says company exec Joseph Kucan. "She's the female lead, Dawn, who's a very strong, very mystic, sorceress-type character. We don't do any of those females-in-distress games. Our females are strong and always save themselves."

● Actress/FF staffer Jennifer Huss adheres to a similar philosophy. Huss was offered the lead role in a CD-interactive game, SPACE: FEMME FRONTIER, produced by the fledgling VRCC company; but she declined. "And for three reasons," notes Huss. "Number one,

I'm through with shot-on-video projects. Number two, the producers were opting for two versions—mainstream and 'adult'. Number three, the operative 'femme' word in the title is just a phony pretense to plug-in with our magazine. No thanks, I'm working on some L.A.-based scripts."

Postscripts:

● Heard that "a bonehead" persuaded Michelle Bauer to bow-out of Surrender's EXOTIC HOUSE OF WAX. She was replaced by Lisa Comshaw (FF 3:2), the actress/entrepreneur, who—as Tori Sinclair—has established a website (<http://www.lastingeffects.com>). "I've turned producer—a female producer, mind you—of erotic video that I know men want. I should know, I've done it for years. I'm just producing a higher quality of work. Check the web for photos and merchandise."

An erotic thriller vet, Comshaw's genre credits include LUKAS' CHILD, SCANNER COP II, HOUSEWIFE FROM HELL, DARK RED. "In EXOTIC HOUSE OF WAX, I play a mute," she explains. "I ended up having to learn some sign language. It's a beautiful language, so I'm inspired to want to really learn this. I'll fill you in with details later, but it's just amazing what you can do with your hands." (Uh-uh, you fill-in your own double entendres...)

● The career of Colleen Camp, a sterling actress and one of Tinseltown's most underrated femmes, has pendulously swung from A to B (THE SWINGING CHEERLEADERS, THE SEDUCTION, LAST ACTION HERO, WAYNE'S WORLD, POLICE ACADEMY II & IV, THEY ALL LAUGHED, SLIVER, SMILE). Let 'em milk the casting dilemma of SPEED 2 ("who's in, who's out") for all it's worth to the tabloids; Ms. Camp

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London Night's illustrated "bad girls" are embodied by flesh n' blood bombshells. The vampiric Embrace (r) becomes Electra—Carmen Electra (top r). Vixen is portrayed by shoot-'em-up siren Julie Smith (l). A movie is imminent.



Elvira mistress of the dark

THE VAMP DEBUTS HER NEW
BREW, FILM SEQUEL, BOOK
SERIES & HALLOWEEN HEIR.

BY CRAIG REID



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Anyone who has lived or played in both Los Angeles and New York City quickly recognizes that each metropolis discharges a distinct energy—an aura, a sort of mystical glow—that radiates from everywhere but originates from nowhere. Maybe it's from the sun-induced, Melatonin-enhanced friendliness apparent in West L.A., or from the cloudy, weather-influenced, dour-faced frowns of the Bronx. One city is an apple and the other an angel. If the Taoist notion of ying-yang has any bearing on this energy (a concept that eloquently suggests within each opposite exists a part of the other), New York has its oranges and Los Angeles has Elvira, Mistress of the Dark (code name: Cassandra Peterson).

Where the popularity of New York's famed television horror hosts "The Count and Igor" spawned from a coffin



Elvira

mistress of the dark

THE VAMP DEBUTS HER NEW
BREW, FILM SEQUEL, BOOK
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(communicating with a New York-accented, Bela Lugosi impersonation, all we saw of the Count was his ruby ring-laden, claw-like hand gesturing from a coffin, instructing his hunchbacked, Jersey-accented, assistant Igor to run the film), Elvira's voluptuously vamped vision literally hatched from a hat. With a reminiscent banter, our esteemed mistress resurrects her past:

"When we went to the set on the first day, we all suddenly realized that there was no name. We originally wanted to call the character 'Vampira,' then we were astutely notified that there was another Vampira and, naturally, we wanted to avoid any legal stuff. We thought that Vampira was just a generic vampire name. As it turns out, there was a Vampira in the '50s so obviously we couldn't use that. So we're on the set saying, 'Oh, what are we going to call it?' So we had everyone—and by everyone, I mean the lighting guys, the sound guys and whoever happened to be in the station at the time—throw in different names into a coffee can, and we picked one of them out. Someone had written down 'Elvira'. And to this day, we still never have been able to find out who put the name in.

"It seemed so inconsequential, at the time, to know. I figured it would have been a cute, little gig which could have given me the time to pursue my other serious acting avenues. I didn't think it would have been a big deal. But now, in retrospect, it turned out to be very significant. I still sometimes wonder: who came up with the name?"

I interject that now Elvira has become an institution. She jokingly quips, "Yes, I should be in an institution. But anyway, it's really a fluke. I have always had this feeling that someone used that name because of the song *Elvira* by the Oak Ridge Boys. It's sort of a country Western tune, and it was like a big

ELVIRA/CASSANDRA PETERSON

"Have *Femme Fatales* readers noticed that, in my Coors standees and commercials, I have less cleavage than a 12-year-old boy? The company pulled back because of 'religious right' flack!"



Cassandra Peterson as Elvira. "Having a baby is the most important thing I have ever done. I hope I can free up more time to spend with my daughter."

happening at the time. It's funny, because at that time many thought that the song was actually about me. So I got stuck with that name, a name that I really hated at first."

In an industry and city where opportunities rise and fall with the ebbing tides, where the life of an acting gig is as predictable as the earthquakes, where O.J. is not just a breakfast drink but a reflection of opposing attitudes, Peterson soon embraced her "evil twin sister" with the open arms of a nurturing sibling. Elvira rewarded Peterson with work, consistent cash flow and peaceful anonymi-

ty while Peterson offered Elvira nothing less than room, board, life and existence. A blending of two personalities—each within each other, opposites yet the same—it's a relationship that has endured over 15 years. Where so many vampire film horror queens have come and gone, Elvira persistently and successfully gnaws away at our jugulars, but never sucks out enough blood to leave us high and dry. How has she been able to accomplish this?

"Well, one thing that is different from all of the other vampire horror queens is that Elvira doesn't have fangs or blood dripping

down from her teeth. We initially thought about having fangs and really came close to using them. But now I'm thankful that we didn't." She comically garbles, "I wouth be wonthering around wiv my faith full of teef." I squeeze in, "A vampire with a lisp?" She noddingly adds, "Yes, I would've had to have put the things on permanently because I was working so often. So, thankfully, we didn't do the fang thing."

We speak a bit about our mutual affection for those classic black and white B-horror movies. When I was a resident of Endicott, New York, I'd watch WPIX's *Chiller Theater* every weekend. The show would sign-on with a Claymation "Chiller" logo protruding up from the ground, only to be eaten by a six fingered hand as eerie music faded into the dying whisper of "Chiillerrrr." Broaching a recollection of the show's hosts, The Count and Igor, led to a discourse of Elvira's birth and longevity.

"You know, at the time, it seemed that each small town was coming up with its own horror host or hostess. The advantage of mine was that my small town happened to be Hollywood, that was the big difference. The other big difference was that, generally, the other towns would use like the local car dealership-owner kind of person. I mean, I had already been an actress, dancer and stuff, and many of these shows didn't always have professional performers.

"It was also by accident that Elvira became a unique kind of character. The person that was looking to hire a horror host to replace the previous one named Seymour,—who was funny but had sadly passed away—just happened to come down and see me in a theater. I was performing in *The Groundlings*, a popular L.A. based comedy improv group. He saw me doing a character at that time, a Valley Girl who was like an actress. Really shallow, a bimbo. He saw this character



Peterson in ALLAN QUATERMAIN & THE LOST CITY OF GOLD. "I was cut out of the film, but they still use my picture to sell it." Consult FF 1:3 for the story.

and loved it, and said to me, 'Oh, that's what I want you to do.' So he hired me after that saying, 'Just keep the character like that, it's great. You can host horror movies like that.' I answered [affecting a Valley Girl lilt], 'I could?'"

"So the television station told me they wanted me to come up with a very sexy vamp, kind of a female vampire look. And I was thinking, 'Wow Okay. Whatever you say.' A friend of mine, Robert Redding, drew a picture of what he thought I should look like. Then I teamed that look up with what I had already created, producing a very unique character that I would have never, never sat down and said, 'Okay, here is a vampire that acts like a Valley Girl.' If they [KHL-TV in L.A.] had called me in to do a scary sort of vampire character for the MOVIE MACABRE program, my instincts would have been to

go in and do that. But, instead, I ended up using that bad high school girl accent impersonation. The vampire-Valley Girl combination was just really an accident."

New York had the "Count," while L.A. had a svelte, well-endowed vampire. In less than a year, her MOVIE MACABRE program was launched into syndication throughout the U.S. Elvira landed instant notoriety as the first emcee in American history to be broadcast in 3-D. With countless TV appearances, cameos in film, Halloween specials and a rising stock that encompassed record deals, CDs, commercials and videos, Elvira had tak-

en off like a bat out of hell. The Mistress of the Dark sustains her sovereignty as a virtual merchandising bonanza. But can Peterson's celebrity subsist past the finite embodiment of Elvira?

"I think about Elvira's survival that almost daily. You know, it fluctuates. I'm going along now, you know, feeling that I'm still looking okay in the dress and I can get at least a couple of more years out of it. But I hope and think that there is the possibility that I can eventually retire from the live performances of my career. It's like the case of Superman; nobody goes around and does a live performance of him, but you can still merchandise the character.

"I have a trainer and I train five days a week now, at two different places. I am very diligent about that because in order to stay in that dress—let me tell you!—you just can't sit around and do nothing. As you get a little bit older, it gets a bit tougher but I think the character still comes out looking pretty good. The day I start looking pathetic in the outfit, then it is time to hang it up."

The man currently responsible for keeping Elvira's syndication machine well oiled and running smoothly is Peterson's ever vigilant husband-manager, Mark Pierson. A shy sounding lad, Mark utilizes his "grave" personality to assure that the legacy of Elvira will never fade into oblivion. He enthusiastically shares with us what to expect from Elvira in the near future: "You can get the details from Cassandra, but up an coming events include a line of Elvira trading cards being released by Comic Images, a new Elvira pinball machine called *Scared Stiff with Elvira*, a compilation of her comics

series, a series of three humor-horror-mystery novels, an appearance at Disney World in Florida and I'm actually just on the phone finalizing Elvira's return to Las Vegas with a one week Halloween appearance at the Riviera Casino."

As the name Elvira quickly became synonymous with Halloween, she broke advertising precedent in 1987 by becoming the first female celebrity ever to endorse a beer product. Cast as the official Coors Beer spokesperson, she annually pitched the company's suds during Halloween, but 1996 is this year that the keg has run dry. No longer quaffing a couple of Coors, the Mistress of the Dark is tapping into Elvira's Night Brew. So what happened with Coors?

"Essentially, I was offered my own beer by some of the executives that split off from the Coors Company. Apparently, my campaign with Coors, according to them, was the most successful campaign that they had staged over the last few years. They felt, and I agreed, that Coors wasn't using me to my full advantage. In fact, they were pulling back on the Halloween campaign because they were getting flack from the religious rights groups and the Coors family is extremely conservative. I don't know if *Femme Fatales* readers have noticed, but in my Coors standees and commercials, I have less cleavage than a twelve-year-old boy. They covered up everything and I didn't really like that. I mean I've made the character what it is and I really don't see what's really wrong with it. I didn't really understand that, and that was part of the relationship that always bothered me



Information on ALL is available from the NEW CITY OF CHICAGO who is one of the few who will give you pictures in and of CHICAGO for the money.

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quilt, and a small table with a white cloth. The room was decorated with a few flowers and a small table with a white cloth. The room was decorated with a few flowers and a small table with a white cloth.

Essentially I was offered my own newspaper and the right to elect a board of trustees. Some twenty applicants for my position were interviewed. I was chosen as the best qualified to carry out the job. I had started at a very young age and had gained the experience

[illegible][illegible]

Honesty even it was a
good thing for
me. I was not in the
field of the business for a
long time and I was not
the only one.

[illegible]

But now I'm excited about a chance to tell the world how I feel about the world I'm living in. I'm writing for young adults — not adults — I'm an author, not a writer. I have a pen name, and I feel more comfortable putting it on the cover than my real name. We're going to be writing with each other.

[illegible]

ELVIRA/CASSANDRA PETERSON

“The day I start looking pathetic in the outfit is the time to hang it up. When she gets old enough, I’ll put my daughter in that dress and she can go out and be the new Elvira.”

forward to the treatment of
drug abuse + how to do it
Los Angeles

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The *Journal of the American Medical Association* has published a study that suggests that the use of a single, low-dose, long-acting antipsychotic may be more effective than a combination of two or more antipsychotics in the treatment of schizophrenia. The study, conducted by researchers at the University of California, San Francisco, found that patients who received a single, low-dose, long-acting antipsychotic had a higher rate of response and a lower rate of side effects compared to patients who received a combination of two or more antipsychotics. The study also found that the use of a single, low-dose, long-acting antipsychotic was associated with a lower rate of hospitalization and a lower rate of mortality. These findings suggest that the use of a single, low-dose, long-acting antipsychotic may be a more effective and safer treatment for schizophrenia than the use of a combination of two or more antipsychotics.

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"I want to have a more
normal and I suppose
between a very different
nature that is very, in
order to have to them
drive for the full
you have to get out
and the feeling. But to
you get a lot better, it
gives a lot stronger"

However, overall it was a good relationship while it lasted, and it was very beneficial for me because I got a lot of national exposure with the TV commercials.

"But when I was given the opportunity to have my own beer, I could not refuse that. Because, on one hand, I was just a paid actress hired to do the commercials but now I'm actually participating in the sale of the beer. Elvira's Night Brew is made by a microbrewery in Minneapolis, so I'm heading to Chicago to attend a beer festival then to Minneapolis and then to Denver and so on. The beer debuted in July and should hit California, New York and Florida later this year.

"But what I'm really excited about is the series of *Elvira* comedy/mystery novels [Berkley Publishing] that I am writing for young adults. I think eventually these can continue fine without me being there as a person to promote them. I write them with my partner, John Paragon. They're really fun to write. We started out along the *Goosebumps* line but for older kids, so they are a little bit more edgy with a lot more humor—but real stories with a campy edge. The *Elvira* books are credited to 'Elvira with John Paragon'. But we really think with one mind. He writes a couple of chapters, I write a couple of chapters, then we go back and forth and put them all together. I'm also looking

ELVIRA/CASSANDRA PETERSON

"The day I start looking pathetic in the outfit is the time to hang it up. When she gets old enough, I'll put my daughter in that dress and she can go out and be the *new* Elvira."

forward to the possibility of doing some shows back in Las Vegas."

And why not? Over the years, Peterson's career has been a series of logical hurdles that now seem to reflect the "full circle" concept. Starting out as a singer, dancer and comedienne, her auspicious "show biz" baptism was as a Vegas showgirl. A trip to Italy initiated her interest in acting but, upon returning to America, Peterson reconciled herself to the reality that singing, dancing and comedy put food on the table. Eventually moving to L.A., her stint in improvisational comedy led to the Elvira phenomenon which opened the floodgates and carried her upstream. Hence, a

Las Vegas comeback not only holds a special place in her heart, but it's where Peterson was inspired to professionally prosper by the King, aka Elvis Presley. It was a night that changed the direction of her life. As surreal as Elvira is, perpetually flanked by moribund icons, the reality of Elvis's death is something that Peterson sadly acknowledges.

"It amuses me that people refuse to believe that he

is dead [referring to "Elvis sightings" and the recent phone call to THE JERRY SPRINGER SHOW by a man claiming to be Elvis, secretly living as a hermit in Canada]. So many just don't want to believe this. The character was bigger than life, and people don't want to believe that someone like that can die. It's like the 'people who have been abducted by aliens' sort of thing. People cling onto it and just can't let go. I think it's time for people to just snap out of it.

"And it's like with Bruce Lee [i.e. stories implying that Lee faked his death]. It just broke my heart, that whole Bruce Lee thing and his son. Oh, it was so sad. I loved Bruce Lee and I was such a big fan. I couldn't believe it.

He's much more than just a martial arts star."

So how did Peterson land a date with Elvis? "When I was a showgirl in Las Vegas, my roommate had been dating Elvis's money manager, Joe Esposito. When Elvis came to town, he would always come to see the

"I train 6 days a week now, at 2 different places. I'm very diligent about that because, in order to stay in that dress—let me tell you—you just can't sit around and do nothing. But as you get a bit older, it gets a bit tougher."



shows that I was in. It was really cool because they would clean out the whole theater so only he and his entourage would be in the showroom. After one show, he had a party which my roommate and I were invited to. When I went there, Elvis just sort of gravitated to me because I was 17 and all the other invited showgirls were mostly in their thirties. I really looked like a fish out of water—you know, practically off the farm into Vegas and I'm sure he could spot me a mile away saying, 'What's wrong with this picture?' I was very naive and very young, so I think that Elvis just latched on to me. But it was great, it was like a dream come true. He was wonderful, one of the nicest people I have ever met in my life.

"People now say, 'Oh, he was on drugs' and everything, but he was so anti-drugs and we really talked about that. He asked me if I ever smoked pot saying [repeating his words in a patriarchal kind of voice], 'Don't ever do that, don't ever do that.' He was just so down to earth and nice, and a real gentleman. So when all these comments came out later, it really made me mad. I know Elvis died from a drug overdose, but I think it is a very, very, different thing. These were drugs doctors were prescribing to make him go to sleep, because he would be all up and jittery after the show. So then he would need something to wake him up.

"It's like a lot of women who OD on valium, because doctors pump them full of the stuff for their nerves. If you ever asked them, 'Are you doing drugs?' they would say, 'Oh no, are kidding?' People can be misled to think that just because something is prescribed, it's safe. Not so. Look at all the people taking Prozac. I mean, God, it's a dangerous drug but—hey!—the doctors say it's okay. Same thing now with Melatonin. It's a natural product that the body produces, so we think

ELVIRA/CASSANDRA PETERSON

"My movie sequel is titled ELVIRA AND THE VAMPIRE WOMEN; babes in black beating the hell out of each other, cleavage, skimpy costumes—what it takes for a successful film."



Debating on film as ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK (88) Roger Corman is producing the sequel, written 4 years ago as ELVIRA & THE VAMPIRE WOMEN

it's okay to take [recent scientific reports are now questioning its use]. Morphine is a body product, is that an excuse to take that? Anyway, I really think he got caught up in that horrible cycle of taking stuff to wake up, and taking stuff to help him sleep. Pretty soon you need more because you build up a resistance, so you take more, and then eventually."

Peterson's quivering voice lapses into silence. As any compassionate person realizes, dwelling on the past is futile because things like death are immutable. However, Peterson is conspicuously shaken that she couldn't brake the vicious

cycle that eclipsed her friend's life. It's likely her activist crusades—as a fervent supporter of animal rights and AIDS research—circumvent those surges of helplessness. Peterson's alliance with Elvira affords them an opportunity for a binding legacy; demonstrating, to their public, the art of caring.

"There is something I'd just love to do it if we can get it together in time. It's a big undertaking. We're putting together a huge costume ball in Hollywood—Elvira's First Annual Masquerade Ball—featuring a giant costume contest with really great prizes like

round trip tickets to Paris, cars and stuff like that and it would be quite accessible for people to attend. One would pay money to go to it and, of course, all the proceeds would go to Aid for AIDS, a group here in L.A. So we'd like to do this every year in order to raise funds for people with AIDS. With this group, we know that people with AIDS get assistance to help pay for housing, clothing, food, etc... So we try to help the people directly. Each year, I also donate money to 38 charity groups based on their budget and how much of the money goes to the people. Too many charities spend our donations on administrative costs. That is not correct. But I do as much as I can with what little free time I have."

Of course, that leisure time is becoming more constrictive with the birth of her daughter Sadie, now going on two.

"It has been a challenge, I want to tell you. I mean having a child is a full time responsibility. People think that I just work one month out of the year [October], but that is only when they usually see me as Elvira. We are always busy putting deals together, merchandising, writing, but I have been lucky to be always working. It has been very difficult adding a baby into my life, but it's wonderful being a parent and I love it more than everything. I just wish I had more time to do it. I really thought that I could hold out until I was a little bit older and Elvira would be slowing down. But it's bizarre that Elvira has not slowed down one iota.

"What's neat is that she is aware of who I am and who Elvira is. Oh, she just loves it. When she sees me dressed up, she says, 'Mommy, Elvira!' She comes with me to the photo shoots. Last week, she came to a session with me and she wants to sit with me and be in the photographs. I mean, she's posing with me, so when we try to drag her away from it

A surfeit of vampire films notwithstanding, Peterson is "moving along" with **ELVIRA & THE VAMPIRE WOMEN**, "though I seriously thought about doing another kind of movie."



“When I was a Vegas showgirl, Elvis had a party that I was invited to. He gravitated to me because I was 17 and the other showgirls were in their thirties. It was a dream come true.”

she says, ‘No, no—*more, more.*’ She is in love with the whole Elvira thing. She sits in the house, and looks at all the Elvira pictures and points and says, ‘Mommy.’ I mean she gets into the whole thing.”

As an actor adapts and professes his/her compatibility with a singular role, there's the looming risk of stereotype; the consequences are subliminal anxiety, which slowly strangles the actor's creativity, and career stagnation. Trapped by success, an obsessive attempt to distance oneself from a trademark character may decline into disappointment. The public has resigned itself to soldering the actor with his/her screen counterpart, and both eventually fade from sight. Just ask any child star or most of STAR TREK's supporting cast. Does Peterson feel that her fate has already been sealed by her union with Elvira?—will she eventually try to break away from that label?

“No, not really. I'm the one who chose to make it as Elvira, I really don't need my name out there—I'm perfectly happy to never hear my name. With the Berkley books, the authors' names were originally listed as Cassandra Peterson and John Paragon. But I insisted that they use Elvira. Because to many, Elvira is an actual person and they think that Elvira is Elvira all day. I would like to keep that myth happening, especially for kids. I've been at this for fifteen years, so a whole generation of kids have grown up with the character and there's some who think that Elvira is real. It's rare when someone walks up to me and says,


‘Hey, it's Elvira.’ It's usually a shock, but I'm really happy. After all [*comically sobbing*], it's nice to get a little attention to myself.

“Also, I think some actors get so identified with their character and eventually try their whole life desperately trying to escape that shadow. But I pretty much am jumping on the bandwagon and going for it. I was an actress for about twelve years before Elvira, and know how difficult it is to survive as an actress let alone to make a good living. So when I saw something that was really working, I just went gung-ho. I now realize that I wouldn't mind dressing up in a gorilla suit for this long if it was a good paying job in show biz. In the beginning, I did feel a bit schizophrenic but not anymore and I don't mind doing this for the rest of my career. Because of Elvira, I can do what I want. It is pretty rare in Hollywood to have any type of an acting job that lasts fifteen years—and doing the same thing in many different projects, but still playing the same character. However, I am doing other stuff as Cassandra that is not related to Elvira. I just sold a pilot script where I'm a producer. But right now, I'm still trying to get the sequel to my first film, ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK, off the ground.

“It's now entitled ELVIRA AND THE VAMPIRE WOMEN. We do have a script but, after this next rewrite, I don't know how close it's going to be to the original script that was written four years ago. Basically, it's Elvira versus vampire women. It kind of says it all right there. Babes

Elvira's familiar photo byline, her cleavage (it & facing), was victim of a Coors cover-up. “They covered up everything. I didn't like that.” She's pitching Elvira's Night Brew, distilled by executives who “split off from the Coors Company.”



A woman with dark hair and a surprised expression lies in a coffin. Her legs are raised high into the air, supported by a large, dark, triangular object. She is wearing a red dress. The coffin is surrounded by flowers and two human skulls are visible on either side of her head. The background is a dark, textured wall.

"I was born to shock," she writes in *Transylvania 90210*, her first Berkley book. "The greatest minds of literature have chilled us with nightmarish visions—Shakespeare, Dickens, Poe, Rush Limbaugh—why not Elvira?"

in black, beating the hell out of each other. Lots of cleavage, lots of skimpy costumes, it has what it needs for a successful film. Maybe for some action fights, we might be calling you up if you are willing to work for pennies a day. It's a Roger Corman production."

I reply that it would be a neat twist if Peterson could play dual roles; as Elvira and her nemesis, the vampire queen. I mean, she could literally engage in a catfight with herself...

"You almost hit the nail on the coffin. It's funny you say that, because that is basically what is in the script right now. The queen of the vampire women is an evil Elvira-like identical twin. She changes her form to look like me so she can get me in trouble. Although she looks like me, underneath the rubber mask, wig and clothes she looks nothing like me. So she will also be played by me. It should be neat fighting myself. But I am still wondering if I want to do that because, of course, now I have written myself into every second of that film. It's like, 'Great, now I'll be working in every second of this film. Like when am I going to get a break?'"

Has the recent release of *VAMPIRELLA* added to the urgency of *ELVIRA/VAMPIRE WOMEN*'s production?

"No, there are a lot of vampire films that have come out. After *INTERVIEW WITH A VAMPIRE*, there must have been about twenty vampire movies out. One of our problems was going, 'My God, I don't know if there is enough room for another vampire movie right now.' It made me seriously think about doing another kind of movie. But we are moving along and, hopefully, will start rolling by the beginning of next year."

The media has chosen to label the '90s as the decade of the female. This is no more evident than with the past summer Olympic Games in Atlanta. American women

ELVIRA/CASSANDRA PETERSON

"How do I want to be remembered? I'd ideally love for Elvira to remain a Halloween icon. But as Cassandra, I'd like to be remembered as someone who had time to be a good mother."



El samples a Bally pinball machine, another of her namesake merchandising tie-ins. Bally is debuting a 1996 pinball christened "Scared Stiff with Elvira."

earned more medals than U.S. male applicants, and the American women's soccer, basketball, gymnastics and softball teams really accentuated the matriarchy of the '90s. Peterson's entrepreneurial impetus is similarly progressive, but Elvira is bereft of sexual partisanship; women and men admire her externalized personality and assertiveness. Elvira/Peterson have transcended corporate Hollywood's discriminative litmus test for actresses (age, single status, etc.)...

"Being a female character has made it a bit more difficult. I mean here, when you are over thirty years old,

like they don't gleam at you. But, as a performer, you must always be ready to move on. I always just wanted to be an actress, but now I want to write more and get into production. You know, it's a natural progression for actors to want to get behind the camera because, once you have seen the inner workings, you see how important that stuff is. Also, you don't have to dress up, and don't have the pressure to look good and glamorous, if you're a writer. Also, writing is a wonderful creative outlet where one can be more creative than acting, and you can do it until you're old and nobody

will really ever know." She humorously adds, "Sometimes, I want to sit down for long stretches of time and just write. But then it hits me, 'Oh man, there is a baby running around here.'"

I conclude the interview by asking Peterson how she—and Elvira—would prefer to be remembered.

"That's a heavy question. What I would ideally love is for Elvira to remain as an icon for Halloween. Almost like Santa Clause is for Christmas, and the Easter Bunny is to Easter. Maybe one day they'll have Elvira's hanging out on the street corners ringing bells! Essentially, I would like Elvira to become a symbol of the Halloween because, to a degree, she is already. But Cassandra? Oh my gosh. I would like to be remembered as someone who had time to be a good mother. It sounds corny, but having a baby, to me, is the most important thing that I have ever done. It's fun and I hope that I can free up more time to spend with my daughter. And when she gets old enough, I'll put her in that dress and she can go out and be the next Elvira."

Her pneumatic presence as sharp as her wit, Elvira qualified as *Femme Fatales'* premiere B-Queen (5.3). Her career variably burgeoning in the print, video and television mediums, Peterson diligently pursues the sweet nectar of success with the stinging passion of her royal, arthropod-like counterpart. Muhammad Ali once said, "Float like a butterfly and sting like a bee." An entomologist will tell you that butterflies are easy prey for birds, bats, and other insects, but the queen bee is fast, furious and hovers with the power of a helicopter and the stamina of a shark. Elvira will bug her opposition with such venomous resolve that her performance as the seductive, apparitional Mistress of the Dark will mesmerizingly enshroud her competitors' devotees.

It is no use to resist: The queen rules.

sofia shinas

The CROW

AVENGED ANGEL, SCI-FI SIREN, FEMME FATALE. SURVIVING BRANDON LEE'S DEATH, SHE SOARED TO "OUTER LIMITS."

BY DAN SCAPPEROTTI

It happened during her interview for an OUTER LIMITS retrospect. Sofia Shinas grinned. During the intervening years, Shinas' off-screen acting challenge was losing the artificiality behind the smile. First, there was the very premature death of Brandon Lee. Then there was the catastrophe that nearly cost Shinas her life. But this warm L.A. afternoon, Shinas cracks another smile. It's genuine and unrehearsed. *Flashback:* a six-year old Shinas was impacted by a performance of MAN OF LA MANCHA. She pledged her life to drama. Training in her native Canada, Shinas cut her teeth on *The Boom Boom Room* and other regional productions before transplanting herself to Manhattan. Then came the fateful move to Los Angeles.

Making her film debut in *THE CROW*, Shinas was indirectly embroiled in a controversy that skirted commercial consequences. Brandon Lee, as a victim of Detroit's criminal colony, returns from the grave to avenge his fiancée's death. But a non-scripted tragedy



THE CROW cast Sofia Shinas as Brandon Lee's ill-fated fiancée. Shinas notes her role "was supposed to be much larger. But due to circumstances, I never had the chance."

proved no less violent, while filming in North Carolina, Lee was fatally shot with a gun that was "supposed" to be loaded with blanks. He died on March 31, 1993.

Cast as Shelly Webster—Lee's slain betrothed—Shinas' role "was supposed to be much larger. But, due to circumstances, we never got the chance. I was there when it happened. We had been working on the film for about a month before it happened. That night, we were actually going to start working more on our scenes together. They were finishing the more violent scenes. We

were going to shoot the scenes where Brandon's character could portray real emotion as opposed to—*bang! bang!*—shoot 'em up. It turned out to be the film's last real violent scene, actually. Then the tragedy...I was emotionally traumatized. I immediately left the set. We were all just stunned, having known Brandon as a wonderful person. Completely professional, a real fun kind of guy. I just became a recluse for the next six months. It taught me to understand and realize my own mortality."

Months after Lee's demise,

the supporting cast returned to the studio in an effort to salvage the film; their communal goal was to transform the incomplete product into a testament to the late actor. "Going back was very difficult," recounts Shinas, "—because we really felt his presence." The grim circumstances that dictated the re-editing of the film reduced Shinas' role to flashback scenes.

Healing from her emotional lacerations, Shinas approved a role in Showtime's steamy *RED SHOE DIARIES*. Cast in the "Borders of Salt" episode, her character's penchant

for trains broaches a world where sensuous fantasy turns into reality. "It was an interesting little script which Zalman King, creator of the series, wrote himself," says Shinas. "It was fun. It was different if you want to delve into the realm of erotica. The show took about ten days to film."

"They used a body double for some of the shots. It's very deceiving because if you watch it, you think a lot of it is me. You do see part of me in the actual scene, but a lot of it is a body double. I have no problem with nudity as long as it's done in con-



“We shot THE CROW for about a month before the tragedy. That night, Brandon would have portrayed real emotion as opposed to—bang! bang!—shoot ‘em up.”

text and it's not gratuitous. Of course, there's a lot of different ways to interpret that. Tibor Takacs is a very gifted director.”

Traveling to Tucson, Arizona, Shinas supported “bad boy” Charlie Sheen in *TERMINAL VELOCITY*. “I’m the girl with the broken leg,” she explains. “—the sidekick with the hat. It was a lot of fun working with Charlie. My character is a really bad skydiver. By the end of that film I have *two* broken arms. I liked the role because of the fact that she was a real tomboy, quite a rambunctious little girl. I really love to play characters that are so far from me. I got a real kick out of that.”

Her subsequent assignment, *OUR GLASS*, invited Shinas to play a polar opposite role. Directed by co-star C. Thomas Howell, she was cast as Dora Jensen, “an enraged woman who has a score to settle with Howell’s character. She tries to sabotage his company and set him up for murder. It was so much fun for me to play that role because, again, I was this psychotic woman who gets to play dress up. She dresses up as

a prostitute at one point. She delves a lot into that whole dark side.”

Because Dora is skilled in martial arts, Shinas was obligated to tally some experience for the combat scenes. “I had a trainer,” she recalls. “Ironically enough, he was Brandon Lee’s personal trainer, Michael Vandrell. I trained for about two months. Everyone was so nice, especially since they knew I had been working on *THE CROW*. They were all a little paranoid.”

MGM renewed *THE OUTER LIMITS*, a sci-fi series that survived only two seasons (1963-’65) on the ABC network. Showtime launched the revival by shooting 45 minute episodes which were initially telecast on the cable network and subsequently syndicated sans “controversial” footage (i.e. nude scenes). Shinas played the title role in her “Valerie 23” episode. “Mary Jo Slater had cast me in a film called *STREET FIGHTER* with Jean-Claude Van Damme,” says Shinas. “Although I had to cancel because of a schedule conflict with another film, Mary Jo remembered me and called me back for

7. “I have no problem with nudity as long as it’s in context, not gratuitous. Of course, there’s a lot of different ways to interpret that.” Bottom L. Shinas’ candle-lit bath in *THE CROW*. The accidental death of Brandon Lee (bottom r.) prompted the re-editing of Shinas’ scenes: her footage was abridged to flashback scenes.



THE OUTER LIMITS

"Valerie is what I like to call 'a robot gone bad'; though ambitious, she goes *haywire*! Jonathan Glassman wrote the script. Valerie is a robot who is brought to life so she can be a companion to handicapped people, such as Frank [Williams Sadler] who works in a robotics company. She is made his personal assistant, and she can do anything an organic woman can do. She's supposed to be the ideal woman. But she also feels all the emotions an organic woman does. When she gets upset, she cries. She feels jealousy, and all the emotions we all feel, and she goes crazy."

Shinas' malicious android exacted several stages of makeup, including a detachable cranium that flipped open to reveal data circuits. In fact, Shinas and the makeup chair



were nearly inseparable; additional prosthetics were tailored for a head wound and an electrocution scene. "It took so long to do," she sighs. "I was in makeup for eight hours for an intricate bald cap—it took that long to apply! It was an appliance, naturally, and it looked great. It definitely strained my patience a few times. I hope I'm never in heavy contention for STAR TREK.

"We shot two versions of THE OUTER LIMITS love scene. One was nude for cable; for broadcast TV, they had us do the same scene with our clothing on!"



THE OUTER LIMITS. L. Valerie 23, "a robot gone bad." As Bill Sadler's android mate (b). Shinas' 8-hour makeup application included "an intricate bald cap [1]."

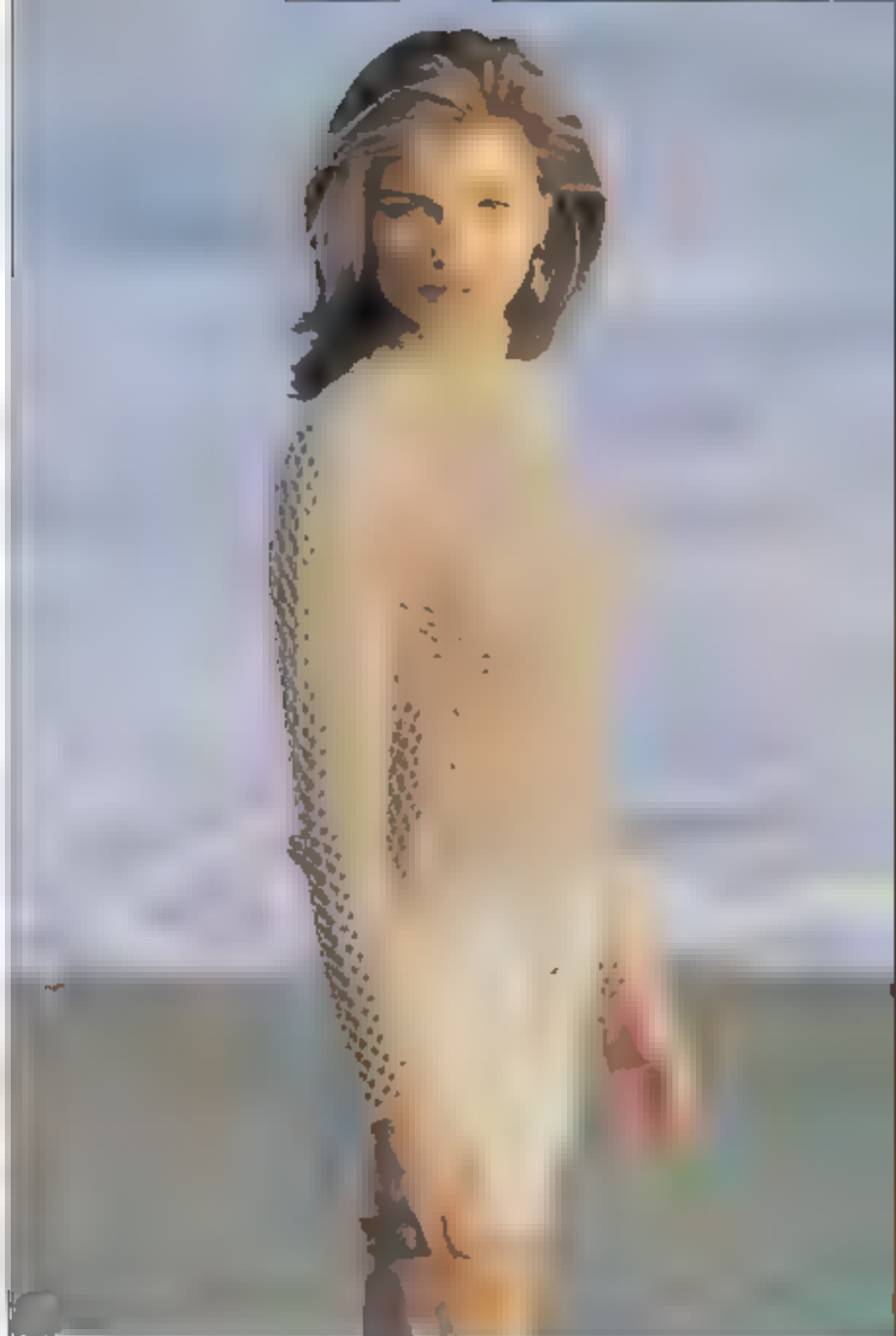


"It was really frustrating because I had to walk around with this appliance under the lights. Everyone tried very hard to accommodate me, but it was very difficult. You had to sit perfectly still for eight hours in a chair. Trying to play a robot that feels all those different emotions was a stretch. You're walking a fine line on the border and you have to walk that line to play the character, otherwise, it looks superficial and it won't come off very well."

Valerie's relationship with the disabled technician turns physical; as the surrogate suitor, Shinas performed her more impassioned scenes in the buff. "And that was very hard, too," she insists, "because nudity is not my favorite thing. I don't think my mother appreciated it, frankly. They shot another version for broadcast television. They cut the scene and had us do the exact same scene with the clothing on."

A debilitating auto collision almost derailed her career, but Shinas bounced back. Flipping through a script titled LOVE HER MADLY, Shinas describes her plum role as "a femme fatale. Her name is Hadley, an ambitious woman who'll do anything to be a star." Yes, it's another opportunity to play a character antithetical to her real life persona. Shinas' acting agenda sometimes takes a backseat to her optional vocation: "I'm a songwriter," she beams. As a high school student, Shinas jammed with a band called Funky and the Psychedelic Fish; she was billed under the autistic *nom de guerre*, Catfish. Upon wrapping THE CROW, she cut an album—succinctly titled *Sofia Shinas*—for Warner Brothers. "I'm working on my second record," Shinas smiles. "It'll include *Old Habits*, which I wrote with a friend. My first record was more dance-oriented. This is more introspective. Darker."

(Thanks to Sheila Lussier for additional dialogue.) □



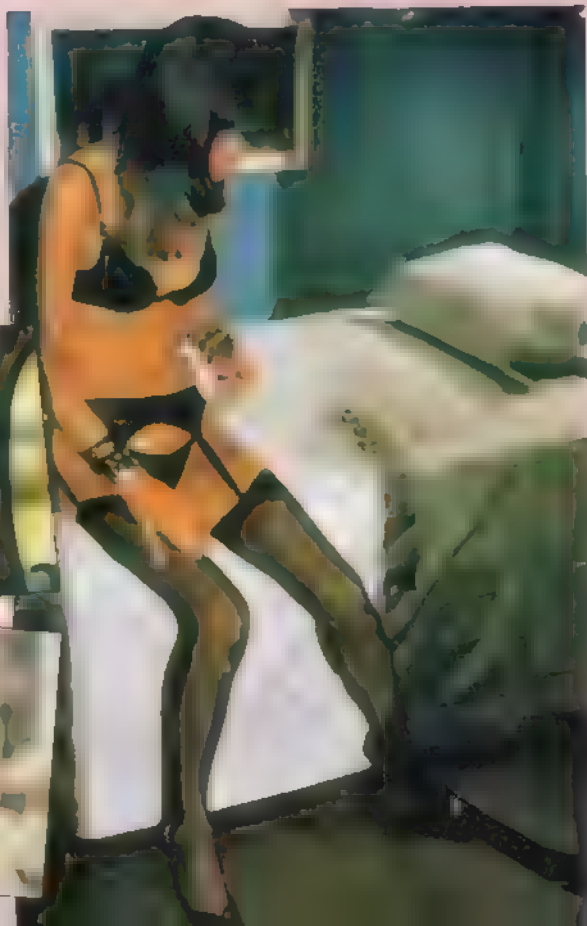
Fully recovered from a near-critical automobile accident, Shinnas poses for PF photographers Jan Dean & Ron Arnone. Currently cast as a temptress in LOVE HER MADLY, the actress/singer is debuting her second record album

Lynn Lowry

THE CULT QUEEN WAS CAST IN PIONEERING HORROR PIX OF GENRE GIANTS: ROMERO, CRONENBERG AND DEMME.

BY KEITH BEARDEN

The first thing you notice is the voice. Strong and assured, it could easily belong to a newscaster or FM jazz DJ. I am taken aback. While the face is familiar—more mature but no less beautiful—the voice sounds nothing like the shy, awkward southern girl so familiar from films like *SUGAR COOKIES* and *THE CRAZIES*.



"That quiet little voice is something that I do," explains Lynn Lowry. "On the audition for *Cat People*, I was asked to do my death scene, where I was being chased by the black leopard. In my quiet little voice, I asked them if they really wanted me to do it full out, and they said, 'Yes'—and I just blew them away. I was screaming and crawling and crying—people could hear me all through the building."

While many of today's B-movie starlets will be chewed up and disposed of—along with the forgettable video-only fodder that sustains their 15 minutes of celebrity—Lynn Lowry remains the source of press and fan speculation 20 years past her silver screen prime. Few actresses have made such a lasting impression for having worked in so few films, however, though her output is hardly prolific. Lowry's films have been reputed as cult classics. The hair, anatomic structure

CAT PEOPLE ('82): Lowry's 3-minute role as a hooker. Her inhuman customer is Malcolm McDowell (arr.), who metamorphoses into a panther.



"To be honest, **THE CRAZIES**—and all the movies made early in my career—were good for the time and budget, but I've never really been happy with them. I have always wanted to be in bigger, more mainstream movies."



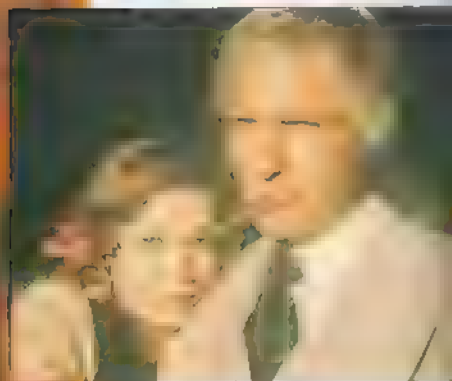
and small-town girl demeanor have sometimes prompted the public to confuse her with Sissy Spacek, but Lowry's huge cat eyes, wide grinning mouth and upturned nose render a uniquely rustic sensuality. Her acting aptitude, challenged in the likes of *THEY CAME FROM WITHIN* and *FIGHTING MAD*, is demonstrative of a dramatic intensity that one would hardly expect from a drive-in diva.

The actress recently concluded her 13 year retirement by launching a comeback in *COMPELLING EVIDENCE*. Directed by Donald Farmer, the scenario involves an action film star (Danny Fendley) accused of murdering his "bitchy" wife (Brigitte Neilson). Added in the mix of suspects are ex-DIFFERENT STROKES jailbird Dana Plato, cast as a mudslinging tabloid reporter, and Lowry as a studio executive.

"My character is sort of a red herring," says Lowry. "Because Danny has backed out of this 12 picture deal they had, and she really doesn't care and would do anything for money, you think she might be the killer."

Former *Splatter Times* editor Farmer has dubbed Lowry "the Queen of The One-take." "I'm quite a perfectionist," she responds. "For a couple of my longer speeches, I had to do two takes, but most of the time I

L "After you've spent 14 hours in the nude on a movie set, nobody cares!"
B Lowry and Paul Hampton in *THEY CAME FROM WITHIN* aka *SHIVERS*



LYNN LOWRY

"For the budget we had, I DRINK YOUR BLOOD was done well. It may sound funny, but the scene where I cut off a woman's hand off with an electric carving knife was beautifully done."

try to get it right the first time. All of the directors I've worked with have been really wonderful and supportive, and Donald is no exception. And when they find out I can do everything in one take, they like me a lot."

Born in Indiana and raised in Athens Georgia, Lowry began acting at age six, and continued through her studies at the University of Georgia. Supplementing her experience with community theater and summer stock, young Lowry was off to New York City. "I went into modeling with hopes that it would give me enough money to pursue my acting career," she remembers, "instead of working as a waitress or something like so many actors do."

Lowry's film debut, *THE BATTLE OF LOVE'S RETURN*, served as the film apprenticeship of one Lloyd Kaufman, the future Troma kingpin wrote, directed and starred in homage to the then-hip *YOU'RE A BIG BOY NOW*, Francis Ford Coppola's coming-of-age saga. But even Troma, which has a history of releasing anything on video (even if incomplete), has kept this one under wraps since it's 1970 NYC theatrical run.

"It's not very good," Lowry laughs. "It's about a man who's this loser-type, nerd kinda guy and the experiences in his life. I played this series of dream girls throughout the film. Like I would be this beautiful waitress, only I'd have this really terrible Brooklyn accent and be really mean. Things like that."

Kaufman's first effort must be bad, 'cause Lowry charitably makes restitution with her subsequent film, *I DRINK YOUR BLOOD*; thumbing its nose at the MPAA, the 1970 nausea-thon provoked enough controversy to be trendily anarchic.

"For the budget we had, I thought it was really quite well done," Lowry says in earnest. "I thought I had some really beautiful scenes in it. I know it sounds kind

of funny, but the scene where I cut the woman's hand off with the electric carving knife was really beautifully done."

Lowry's mute character hung-out with coven of devil-worshipping hippies. As an encore to beating and raping a tank town girl during a Black Mass, the gang feeds LSD to her grandfather. The girl's vengeful brother poisons the cult with rabies-infected meat pies, transforming them into foaming, blood-

lustling morons.

As a result of its graphic violence, *I DRINK YOUR BLOOD* was initially branded with an X-rating. Despite trimming that compromised for a milder R-rating, the film still unyieldingly endures as sadistic excess even among it's gory peers of the time (*MARK OF THE DEVIL*, *LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT*, *THE GORE GORE GIRLS*). The copious bloodletting—scenes of rotted meat and a skinned rat BBQ—may be a great tool to

recruit vegetarians, but it's hardly an ideal experience for a 21-year-old making her second movie.

"It was pretty extreme," Lowry remembers. "We shot it in Sharon Springs, New York—right across the street from this whole complex of Hasidic Jews. They were just appalled at this movie and at us. Not me, of course, but the cast was one of the wildest groups of people I've ever been around as far as drugs and everything like that."

A diminutive budget constrained special effects to dead rodents (the real thing) and shaving cream, the latter simulating infectious rabies "drooling". The film fades-in with the wail of the '70s—wha-wha guitar and air-raid-siren synthesizer—but Lowry's name isn't visible in the credits.

"[Producer] Jerry Gross got mad at me," Lowry relates. "I was romantically involved with Joe (Alligator) Mangine, the cinematographer on the film, and he had to quit the shoot early because he had committed to another project. And because we were involved, I got put in the same bag with him. So there goes my credit."

Drifting into public domain, *I DRINK YOUR BLOOD* has been accessible from a myriad of video distributors. Diehard fans are advised to consult Mexican video outlets for the more extreme "south of the border" cut. *Footnote: before turning to local (L.A.) television, director David Durston helmed one only more movie titled STIGMA, with VD subbing for rabies as a community crisis.*

SUGAR COOKIES (1972) reunited Lowry with Lloyd Kaufman who, this time around, functioned as producer and co-writer. The film was Troma's overture into R-rated sex entertainment (*SQUEEZE PLAY*, *THE FIRST TURN-ON*, et al) before the company locked into their mayhem/slapstick/silicone shtick.

Wearing a brunette wig, Lowry is introduced in the



THE CRAZIES (1973). "a virtual remake of NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD." 7. Lowry succumbs to the bacteria-evoked insanity. She describes director George Romero (b), who shot the film in frosty Pennsylvania, as "wonderful."



film as Alta, a troubled starlet plying her trade in the X-rated circuit, who's murdered by boyfriend/producer Max (George Shannon). Later in the film, Lowry reappears as Julie, a naive, pigtailed actress recruited by bisexual, rival porn producer Camilla (Mary Woronov, playing up her androgynous image to the hilt)

"Dealing with all the nudity was very difficult in the beginning. Just the idea of being nude in front of all these people is hard. But after you've done it, and by the first night you've spent 14 hours nude—nobody cares anymore," Lowry laughs. "Nobody looks at you anymore, you're laying on the floor and crew people are stepping over your nude body. After a while, it's just like you're in clothes."

Director Theodore Gershuny would later stylize the horror film with *SILENT NIGHT, BLOODY NIGHT* (again, with ex-wife Woronov), contorting clichés and spicing up the genre with equal shares of haunting imagery and psychodrama. *SUGAR COOKIES* offered him the opportunity to revolutionize—rather than rhapsodize—the softcore sex cinema. Grungy with an unflinchingly downbeat finale, *SUGAR COOKIES*

Mary Woronov and Lowry bond in the schizophrenic *SUGAR COOKIES*. The associate producer Oliver Stone.



"David Cronenberg was pretty intense. George Romero was more open to spontaneity—like shooting oozing syrup from a spilled can of peaches. Jonathan Demme was like that, too."



THEY CAME FROM WITHIN Immune to the aphrodisiac virus? Lowry's nurse whips into an impromptu striptease, but the doc (Paul Hampton) is unfazed.

IES undermines its crotch tease title by disclosing the consequences of a young woman's coercion into pornography. The film's sexually explicit moments vacillate from arousing to genuinely disturbing. Sample the exchange between Woronov and Lowry, with the latter recounting a sexual experience prior to her own seduction; highly erotic and deeply sad, it's an emotional dichotomy not typically conveyed in your average "hard R" 42nd St. stroke film.

"The director, Ted Gershuny was definitely going for something more artistic than exploitative, and most everyone understood that," Lowry says. "It was a very difficult role for me because of having to do the two different parts. To have both my characters go through the same trauma and abuse from this man, Max, was pretty upsetting."

While *SUGAR COOKIES* is dubiously credited for "introducing" Lowry, it was the first credit for an associate producer named Oliver Stone, who in recent years

has declined to broach his participation with the film. "I remember I met him on a bus in New York, when his career was just starting to take off," smiles Lowry. "He mentioned that we had worked together on *SUGAR COOKIES*. And I had no recollection of him at all!"

You won't find it on tape but Lowry's next film, *SCORE*, is a very funny '70s time-capsule that deserves a cult following. Radley Metzger (*LICKERISH QUARTET*) directed the adaptation of an off-Broadway play about an unhappy, married bisexual couple (Claire Wilbur and Calvin Culver) waging who can score with a naive couple (Lowry, as "Catholic Betsy", and Gerald Grant).

To economize, Metzger shipped the entire production to Crolovitza, Yugoslavia. Lowry enjoyed a one month working vacation, but her on-camera experience is another story: "I was told it would definitely not be an X-rated film—that it was going to be all simulated, no actual sex. I never

had any actual sex. Even the shots of the pubic area, that's not me—they added that later. But what happened was when I wasn't on the set, and they had the big scene between the two men, Metzger shot it hardcore. So now the film is X-rated."

"This came as a quite a shock to me. I was very upset that I was now in a film of that kind. It's next to impossible to appear in a film like that and continue to work as a legitimate actress. At that point, I was also in an NBC soap opera called *HOW TO SURVIVE A MARRIAGE* with Armand Assante and F. Murray Abraham, and I thought, 'When people find this out, my career is over.' But you know... nobody ever found out. It came and went so fast."

During the '70s, Lowry moonlit as a player in daytime soaps; her gig on *ANOTHER WORLD* stretched through two seasons. "It was great to have a job that you knew you'd have for a while. As an actress, that's rare," she laughs. "I like going through the changes that soaps put the characters through. I went from being the mean evil bitch who broke up marriages to being the gold-hearted girl who solved the murder and married the doctor! I enjoyed it a lot."

Picked out among the hopefuls attending an open audition, Lowry was cast in *THE CRAZIES* (1973). Five years earlier, George Romero's debut film earned him a reputation as "the B-Cinema's Orson Welles". But even Romero's most ardent supporters thought the director eclipsed his *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* celebrity by squandering his talent on the likes of *THERE'S ALWAYS VANILLA* and *JACK'S WIFE*, both films were financial flops. Renewing his ties with the genre, Romero once again applied a cinema verité motif to *THE CRAZIES*. Chemicals are the catalyst for an insanity that plagues a Pennsylvania small town. Lowry portrayed Cathy Ful-

ton, one of the townspeople who revolts against the military quarantine and imposed martial law, but she eventually—and quietly—succumbs to the maddening virus.

"We filmed it in Evans City, PA, during the winter," Lowry says, "and while the people were great, and George Romero was wonderful, all I remember was that filming it was cold and wet and dirty and gory and icky."

The film leans on some visceral set pieces (a priest torching himself, a housewife sweeping a field of bloody corpses), but Lowry's resignation to the delirium—giggling in a plot of burning bodies—is particularly unnerving. Some of Lowry's scenes, notably her death at the hands of frightened soldiers, were heavily improvised.

"I wasn't really happy with the way my death scene was shot. Being an actress, and all actresses are hams at heart, I wanted to have this big death scene where I get to fall down, and get back up and stagger around before I die—*milk it to the end*," she laughs. "But George just wanted it very simple; me to get shot and just say 'Oh!' and fall down, which at the time I thought was kind of dumb. But there is something about it that's kind of innocent and pure, kind of like it's taking her back to who she was before she got this disease."

Upon its initial release, **THE CRAZIES** was a boxoffice disappointment. But the film was recently "rediscovered" in the United Kingdom via its video premiers. "To be honest, **THE CRAZIES** and all the movies I was in early in my career...I guess they were good for the time and budget and all but, from my point of view, I've never really been happy with



CAT PEOPLE. "I had to fall down the stairs 17 times. The first time I did the fall, I was cut up; they forgot to take out the nails in the carpeting. I had to get a tetanus shot."

them," Lowry remarks. "I have always wanted to be in bigger, more mainstream films."

THEY CAME FROM WITHIN (1974) was defiantly *anti-mainstream*. David Cronenberg's maiden theatrical release incited even the ire of its Canadian backers. The film clinically

speculated on the consequences of the sex revolution. Casually promiscuous behavior, sustained by inhabitants of a luxury complex, render them vulnerable to an aphrodisiac parasite. The organism transforms the dwellers into rabid sex addicts. Prognostically dramatizing the AIDS

dispersion, Cronenberg concludes his film with a likelihood the infection will expand from a regional disease to a global pandemic.

Lowry's role as Forsythe, the complex's resident nurse, offered her a shot at heroine status. A porno star, Susan Helen Petrie, was hired as the leading lady (Cronenberg reprised this practice by casting X-luminary, Marilyn Chambers, in **RABID**). Like old guard Hollywood directors, Cronenberg physically struck a dramatic chord from his star.

"Susan was not an experienced actress," says Lowry, "and she had trouble reaching proper emotional peak. So one day, she asked [Cronenberg] to do whatever was necessary to help her to cry. I don't know if she suggested he hit her, or if it was his idea. So the two would go off to some other room before a scene; he'd slap her, and she would come back crying."

"After I found this out, he asked me once if I needed his help getting the proper level of emotion or whatever. I said, 'Noooo—I don't think so. I'm an actress. I never have a problem crying.'" Fortunately, most of Lowry's directors exceeded the exploitation level of their work by unobtrusively wedging social commentary into the grand guignol and soft-core scenery. "David Cronenberg was pretty intense, and seemed to know exactly what he wanted," Lowry explains.

"George Romero was a little more open to the spontaneity of the moment. Like, if a can of peaches were to accidentally get knocked over on the table and the icky syrup started oozing out—George wanted to shoot that! Jonathan Demme was that way, too. If he saw a stray dog howling at a tree off in the distance—he wanted to stop

everything to get that shot. Perhaps because of the low budget, and the fact that **THEY CAME FROM WITHIN** was his first feature, David was just much more specific."

FIGHTING MAD (1976), written and directed by the aforementioned Jonathan Demme cast Lowry as the girlfriend of an Arkansas farm man (Peter Fonda) who fights a corrupt real estate company. "Peter has a reputation for being eccentric because people were often very unpredictable around him," nods Lowry. "I was with him in a restaurant eating one night. These two southern boys came up and they were ready to drag him out of the restaurant, right then and there, to come have dinner with them. Peter agreed to come to their house, sometime the following week, just to get them off our backs."

"Peter was such a persona in the '70s. Everybody recognized him, and some people just adored him and some people really hated him. Who knows whether those guys were total fans or rednecks who wanted to do him some serious harm. He carried a gun with him—which I think increased his sense of paranoia."

*Footnote: Fifteen years later, Jonathan Demme landed Oscars (Best Picture & Best Director) for **SILENCE OF THE LAMBS**.*

Lowry was also supposed to co-star in **THE LAST EMBRACE** (1979), Demme's "breakthrough" film; instead, she she experienced her first corporate Hollywood kiss-off. "When I first arrived in Los Angeles, Jonathan called me and wanted me to be in this movie," she relates. "Well, I was thrilled. I went to the set and I met the leading man, Roy Scheider. They fitted me for wardrobe and everything was set. And then, the next day, my agent called me and said Roy Scheider wanted to use his girlfriend [the late Janet Margolin] in the part. So that was that. I actually got

LYNN LOWRY ON "CAT PEOPLE"

"I think the director wanted to get a shot of every woman's tits in the movie. It was either him or the studio! Every single female in the movie, outside of Ruby Dee, had a tit shot."



I DRINK YOUR BLOOD (a) A cult of Satanic hippies (Lowry on left) turn into rabid blood addicts (b) Ten minutes of violence were cut to mollify the MPAA



paid as if I was shooting the film, and every time it plays I get residual checks for it. It's as if I was in the movie, but I'm not."

A meaty role in Blake Edwards' **S.O.B.** (1981), as John Pleshette's girlfriend, was trimmed down to "the back of my head. I have this huge hairdo, which you can barely see at the funeral scene."

The following year, Lowry appeared in Paul Schrader's **CAT PEOPLE** remake as Ruthie, a laid-

back hooker who invites customers recompense her with "tips/Mastercard." One solicitor, who has metamorphosed into a leopard, regresses into a predatory hunt of Lowry within a red light ghetto. Collapsing down a flight of stairs, Lowry's brassiere pops open as she screams for help; it's a T&A contrivance that prompted audiences to burst into laughter. "Basically, I think that Paul wanted to get a shot of every woman's tits in the movie," Lowry re-

marks. "It was either him or the studio—but somebody wanted it. Every single female outside of Ruby Dee in the movie has a tit shot."

Her screen visibility tallies to three minutes, but Lowry was billed among high-profile talent like Nastassia Kinski and Malcolm McDowell; nevertheless, the opulence of an A-movie afforded her no more luxuries than a B-production. "They didn't have very much consideration for the actors," she remembers. "I did all the stuntwork in it. The stunt person thought I was too skinny and wouldn't work with me. They also didn't pad me for the same reason. I had to fall down those stairs about 17 times."

"The first time I did the fall, they had forgotten to take out the nails in the carpeting, so my hands were all cut up. I had to get a tetanus shot. This went on for three days and I was so black and blue, I could hardly walk. So the pain and the horror on my face in that scene is very, very real."

Underwhelming circumstances notwithstanding, **CAT PEOPLE** was her swan song. Turning to television, Lowry appeared in Lynn Littmant's *Once A Daughter* for PBS' **AMERICAN PLAYHOUSE**; she regards her performance as the best of her career. "I've done a lot of theater in the years since then. It's basically all I did, because, frankly, I could not get work!" shrugs Lowry. "In retrospect, I could've worked more in horror and B-movies. But, honestly, I never realized how well accepted my films really were, and the clout I had among fans. It comes as a surprise to me now that people remember me so well. If I had known, I would have pushed my agent for more horror film roles."

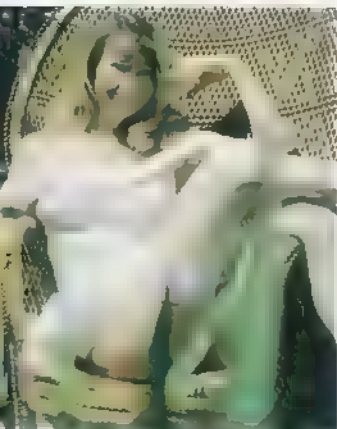
Seated in her comfortable California home as floods erode neighboring territories, Lowry implies that her film career has faded. But filmmakers weaned on her movies have actively volunteered to cast the actress in their own projects. In addi-

tion to COMPELLING EVIDENCE, Lowry recently performed a substantial role in Ivan Passer's PRETTY PATTY'S BABY, though litigation has postponed the latter's release.

Not that she's been idle. Back in 1979, Lowry and Lester Shane launched a writing crusade. The resultant collaborations include a series of screenplays: THE SEXUAL SEXPLOITS OF WHITE LIGHTNING AND THUNDER THIGHS ("It's a lot like the old Batman and Robin, but with a lot of sex in it!"), PAJAMA PARTY HORROR, which had been slated as a Casablanca production in the late '70s, and NOTHING TO LOSE, a "vigilante hospice mystery" about elderly cancer patients who wreak revenge on apathetic society.

As a member part of an alternative medicine clinic, Lowry works as a massage therapist three days a week. Though Hollywood turned its corporate back on her, Lowry draws upon her dramatic training for an appreciative audience: "There is no greater gift, other than helping someone have better health, than to help someone to feel. My massage work helps people obtain greater health and, through acting, I can enlighten people—or help them achieve an emotional catharsis, and that's very fulfilling. In that way my two jobs are related." □

Lowry, relaxing at home (1995). Between roles, which draw upon her "one-take" finesse, she collaborates on scripts that stress genre themes.



YIN & YANG


SCIFI EROTICA



YIN & YANG

SCHIFFER/CALVIN

Opponent of the popular
Clinton's resident
bookishness, Williams
is known for her wit and
humor. In the film, she
portrays the role of
a woman who is
opposed to the
Clinton's resident
bookishness.



Greened as Surrender
Cinema's resident
bombastic: Vanessa
Taylor (l) and Jacqueline
Lovel (r). Deciding to
perform the title role in
FEMALISH, Lovell opted
for a supporting part.
Taylor was subsequently
cast as the lead.



JACKY LOVELL

“My only erotica in WAX is making out with a girl—and a love scene with three girls who attack me.”

with a science fiction twist. It's the brainchild of Surrender's Pat Siciliano, who deflects any pretensions about sexual correctness. Essentially, his films undulate between softcore and NC-17 footage that clinically rhapsodizes lesbian liaisons. The movies have variably impacted the careers of its resident bombshells

Lovell, born in Manhattan Beach, California, played her hand in show business when the deck was stacked against her. Dressed in a T-shirt and jeans, she evokes a 1960's, flower-childish persona, and discourses like a Jefferson Airplane fan, fresh from the Bay Area...

“When I was younger it was always a dream, you know, for a kid to want to be an actress. My parents pushed me to be realistic, saying that I was not going to be a big star so I should go out and do something that would make me money. But I was still into musicals and plays in high school, and really had a blast doing it. It was a very religious school, so it was all biblical stuff. Underneath it all, I knew this wasn't what I was going to be doing. So I got into modeling because it was part time and I thought it would be fun.

“I started college, but then my father died. It was really sad and I was depressed and so was my mother. They had been married for 16-17 years. But she met a guy and decided to sell the house and run off with him to Canada. I didn't want to move so I stayed. Then my younger sister wanted to get married, and so she ran off to Oregon. So now I'm in L.A. alone. I was going to college trying to be an accountant, because that would be a steady, normal job and I worked full time in order to pay for everything. I had a delivery-type job that trashed my car so I had no way to get to school. With everything happening, it got to the point where I said, ‘Just forget school for now, it's not working out. Now that I'm acting, I don't feel bad that I am not in college because I'm still growing up and learning new things. There is always

Bosom Buddies: Taylor and Lovell bonded in FEMALIEN, but Taylor bowed out of EROTIC HOUSE OF WAX. “Too much nudity,” she said.

time to go back to school."

Though Taylor's road to Tinseltown was less riddled with potholes, she's looking for a detour from exploitation films. Adorned in a flower-patterned sun dress and sporting a straw sun hat, her big brown peepers remind me of a fawn's eyes locked on shafts of headlights. She flourishes with a natural, captivating charm.

Leaning into my recorder's microphone, she forewarned me that "There's a strange echo in this room, so when you hear me talk on the cassette it's going to sound like [mimicking a doppler effect echo], 'Hi-hi-hi.' So anyways, anyways, anyways. Although born in Long Island, I was raised on a farm in Barre, Vermont which is near the capitol, Montpelier. I grew up like a country kind of girl with lots of animals; geese, chickens and tons of cows [reminiscently giggles]. I remember the geese would always chase my mom around. It was a wild farm

"For Barre, I wasn't your average high school participant. I was involved in a rock band. I'm a pianist and write music. I even wrote the eighth grade graduation song. I was always known as the weird musician. I was trying to be sexy like Madonna. She was the happening thing. I'd walk around high school in black lace stockings, jean-like miniskirt shorts and all these earrings and stuff. In Vermont, they thought I was whacky. I was always in love with this guy in the band but he ignored me. I did get experience playing in bars, and different clubs, that I normally couldn't get into. I did lead vocals stuff like Pat Benatar and Madonna. The guys in the band always had pictures of models hanging around, so I got involved in modeling in hopes of getting their attention. That failed so I said, 'Screw this, I'm heading to L.A. to be a model there.' I really didn't think about acting."

I surmise that modeling was sort of a slap in the face for those guys who ignored her in Vermont. She nods. "Exactly. Sure. I did some pageants in Vermont, and got close to first runner-up to Miss Vermont. Some of the other contestants hang around and keep trying, but I thought, 'Is that all there is exciting to do in Vermont?' On a whim, I moved out here in L.A. about five



Jacqueline Lovell: "My boyfriend pushed me into acting, but he gets jealous when I do nude scenes with a man. So I try to get nude scenes with women."

years ago. There is so much life here. I was first a waitress in Orange County, then got a job working at Disneyland. But I wanted my own apartment, so I quit Disney and ended up moving to Studio City. Everyone there is trying to be an actor so after doing many little jobs, like multi-level marketing, I thought I may as well try to be an actor too [cynically laughs]. But what really started me was getting into SAG [Screen Actor's Guild] by doing a little movie thing. I wasn't really serious about it, so I was going to auditions without caring. Getting into SAG gave me a kick start. And now I take my acting more seriously."

I drop a couple of questions, like why did she fade the modeling gigs? And what happened to the guys who rejected her in Vermont? "As a model, I have been a pun-up girl for Rigid Tools and for CD covers for Thump Records on 'Lowrider' and 'Baas Construction'...and, of course, a cover girl for *Playboy*. And yes, the boys in Vermont know me now. I'm a celebrity in Vermont. They all know me as the girl on the cover of *Playboy*. My mom went to the store to get the issue. I was in, and they were all sold out. The store owner said, 'Oh, that's the Barre girl.' My

mom said, 'That's my daughter.' He said all those guys were fighting over the *Playboys* in the store. That makes me feel good and I think it's cool."

Some say that softcore films are professionally regressive or even career crippling. But drop that line in Hollywood, and every B-film producer in town will defensively summon a litany of names from *The Bare Facts* ("Oh yeah? How about Sharon Stone, Demi Moore, Kim Basinger, Jamie Lee Curtis, etc., etc., etc."). The bottom line; it's a living. "I decided to attend the JoAnne Barron/D.W. Brown Studio of acting," related Lovell, "and as I was going there, I got a few little extra things like SAG stuff that Mystique Films does for the Playboy Channel. I then met Pat [Siciliano] and he asked if I would like to do some of his movies. So I read for his film, *VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS*, as a featured extra. Then in his next film [*FEMALIEN*], they wanted to cast me as an alien. But, at the time, I didn't feel like I could be in

touch with this alien and how I wanted to play that kind of character. Instead, I really wanted to be the hippie chick, Sun. After three months, I got that role. I felt totally comfortable with this character, because I was really playing myself.

"Then Charlie Band, the president of Full Moon Studios, saw me and wanted me to be in one of his movies. I read for a part in *HEAD OF THE FAMILY*, a black comedy. They gave me the lead female character, Loretta. It was challenging and the first thing I did was develop a Southern accent. Right now, I'm doing so much work that I must be doing something right.

"Things have really taken off with my recent signing with Surrender Films. I'm to do five more films for them, I'm also getting involved in several erotica-style late night television shows. I just starred in a *RED SHOE DIARIES* episode called 'Caged Bird.' It was the longest three days of my life, but it went phenomenally well. I mean, a year ago I was an extra on *DIARIES* and, a year later, they're taking chances on newer actors.

"Then I have this thing called *LOLITA 2000* coming up with Surrender. Lolita is like the cryptkeeper from

TALES FROM THE CRYPT—but cuter. It's supposed to be a TV show, but it could be sold as a movie anthology with three separate stories. In a time where everything in society has gone down with this sexual thing, Lolita wants to liven-up everyone's sex life again by bringing back those old stories about great sexual experiences. So each time she shares these stories, everyone gets back into the sexual groove. It should be cool and a lot of fun.

"I've also been working with Concorde-New Horizons on a 14-part TV series about some comic book thing. I was a lead character in the first episode, and, based on that, I did the lead for the second. This may lead to opportunities to work on some of their SAG films. And currently I'm preparing for Surrender's **EXOTIC HOUSE OF WAX**. I'm going to be playing Star, who's the twin sister of my Sun character from **FEMALIEN**. I'm not quite sure how they worked that out. In **FEMALIEN**, I was based in Venice at the beach, running a business with an 'out of this world' mind. In **EXOTIC HOUSE OF WAX**, I am based more like a college student with a collegiate state of mind. The only erotic scenes I have are to make out with a girl—and to have a love scene with these three girls who attack me."

Though Lovell couldn't relate to **FEMALIEN** and settled for a supporting character, Vanessa Taylor had no qualms about playing the title role: "Although I consider doing the April-May cover of the *Playboy Book of Lingerie* my big break, **FEMALIEN** was my first big picture. [cooly laughs] **'Quote, unquote'**—if you haven't seen it, that's all I say throughout the movie. But, in all honesty, it really was a great experience. It was my first chance to be a lead; they actually put their trust in me. I'm grateful for that."

"Being a femalien, she could be anything she wanted which gave me so much leeway, and freedom, in playing my first lead role. I just had to act like everything was foreign to me. And it really was. I mean, I was in a big studio, they were building sets, and I was looking around like, 'Look at that, what is this?' So everything really was alien to me. You know, lately I have been having alien dreams. I don't mind



Lovell (l) is working on a TV series adapted from "a comic book thing." Taylor (r) may be the live-action counterpart of a London Night comic book heroine.

if you print that.

"Do you believe that stuff about life on Mars? I think it's ironic how maybe I'm trying to be reached by aliens, then I got an alien part in this movie. Are they trying to tell me that they are going to contact me and abduct me? It's far out, man. [teasingly smiles, content that she has set me up for the punchline] I mean, whatever your mind thinks, it can manifest. I do believe in things like that—not really crazy, crazy, but in the supernatural and paranormal. I just like to keep an open mind, and that's why I like the part of being an alien. But really, the true essence of **FEMALIEN**—the person who you saw, even though she was kind of dingy—her real personality is me. It's who I am right now. It's funny, but the way that I go through things in my life, everyday situations, I still act like that. Is that strange? The point is that I haven't let it go yet, I am carrying that sexually naive character with me because it makes me feel so free with life. It's the way I want to be. Basically, I wanted to show myself

"In my next film I played the complete opposite of **FEMALIEN**. I was the lead in a film entitled **TIMELESS OBSESSION** for Mystique films. I por-

trayed an 18th century girl named Sarah. She haunts this guy who's writing a book about true love, though he actually keeps messing up his relationships and cheating on all his girlfriends. He goes to a museum and falls in love with this portrait of me. As the movie progresses, I come out of the painting and wield a spell that binds us together eternally. Flashbacks reveal that I was fatally shot in a past life and, somehow because of that, he keeps screwing up his relationships and he can't let go of his own past lives. So I release him from all of that so he can have a good relationship with me in the painting. It's kind of cute. I have some nudity in it, but I'm comfortable with that."

One month later...

"It's funny," quips Jacqueline Lovell. "My boyfriend was the one who pushed me into acting and he's the one who gets jealous when I'm doing those kind of nude scenes with a man, but not with a woman. So I try to get parts with nude scenes with women. But he's going to have to deal with it. I talk to him about it, because he has never been on the sets to see how everything really goes. We're not all there to pick each other up or have sex. I mean it's really professional and we're just there to do a job, get paid, then go home. It's all about trust and he does trust me, he just doesn't trust the other guys."

"I'm not embarrassed about doing those scenes. I watch them and criticize them and figure out how I could have done it better. But you know, working on these films is just a good experience for being in front of a camera and feeling comfortable and moving around being this character and feeling what they are feeling. I feel like I'm a fully stronger person now. Before I was really stupid and naive, and I went to casting sessions where some people took advantage of me. But now I've taken all of those experiences and just like with everything that I learned in school, I have learned to just stand up for myself. I'm stronger and more confident. No one is going to push me around anymore, and I am the one in control."

"Although my mom is really happy for me, she wants me to stay away

VANESSA TAYLOR

“Like me, Mathilda May debuted as a nude alien. She later did dramatic roles. That’s my goal.”

from ‘nudey’ stuff because she doesn’t like it. But I have a fun time doing it. I don’t see what the problem is. They are naked all over Europe, it’s just that over here people are so uptight about it. It’s a slow process getting established, and I am not going to take a role where I’m not having a good time. I’d rather be having fun playing on the set with a bunch of characters and having a good time playing these fantasy roles, than sitting in an office answering phones all day. The bottom line is that I am having fun, making money, meeting people, and just really having a blast. Realistically I’m 21 and I have a fast metabolism that will go away when I am 25. So to keep in shape right now, I don’t do shit. I have sex a lot, I guess that is my exercise. I know it’s bad, but I am just lazy. But I’ll have to kick in on the exercising pretty soon.”

Within the past couple of weeks, Vanessa Taylor has abandoned—or at least temporarily resisted—her libertine mode: “I love Pat Siciliano, but I turned down EXOTIC HOUSE OF WAX. They wanted me for a supporting role, but I would have been obligated to perform too much of it in the nude. Jim Wynorski wanted me for a science fiction film, and I’d really like to work with him; but, again, long stretches of nudity were mandatory, so I reluctantly said, ‘No thank you.’”

“I think I already paid my dues with FEMALIEN. Do you remember a Tobe Hooper film called LIFEFORCE? Not unlike myself, a French actress named Mathilda May played an alien in that film, and she too was entirely nude throughout the film’s running time. But Mathilda moved on to more dramatic roles. I’d like to do the same thing. I’m not prudish about nudity, but sometimes it’s a distraction. Casting directors keep hiring you to get naked, but acting—real acting—is secondary. If I have to be naked, I want my body attached to a multi-layered personality.” □

Jacqueline Lovell as LOLITA 2000, a made-for-cable series. “Lolita introduces the episode. She’s like the TALES FROM THE CRYPT Cryptkeeper—but cuter.”



Athena Massey

INTRODUCING THE FANTASY CINEMA'S FEMME FATALE.

BY CRAIG REID



THE NUTTY PROFESSOR Massey (left) w/ Eddie Murphy, Alexia Robinson and B-film vet Lisa Boyle "It was the first time I went to bed with a 400-pound man—and the last."

An abridged introduction to two women. *First*, there's Edna Gaines, whose soft, sensuous innocence is chronicled in her RED SHOE DIARIES; her virginal womanhood blooms from an idealized vision of love. And then there's Quad-Rena, a hybridized

human arthropod who's a blood junkie; secluded within a dumpster, she sticks herself with a ball-point pen which serves as a makeshift hypodermic. What, specifically, do both of these characters have in common? Their mutual "host," actress Athena Massey. Originally interviewed in *FF* 4:7, Massey has subsequently tallied a surfeit of roles that stretch from supporting player to leading lady. During the past six months, casting directors have scrambled for Massey's attention, prompting her steady ascent to the "A-list."

Volunteering to chronicle her latest career developments, I headed out to meet Ms. Massey at Michel Richard's (nasally pronounced, with a French lilt, as "*Michelle Rishard's*," very L.A.) for cappuccino; it's located in Beverly Hills, near 3rd and Robertson. As a newcomer to Los Angeles, the lush panorama reminded me of the matching scenery in Aaron Spelling's soaps. You know—MELROSE PLACE, BEVERLY HILLS 90210 and all the behind-the-scenes contretemps which

are locked into the tabloid treadmill. The hiring, the firing, the re-hiring. Then the car radio blasted something about the cast of FRIENDS threatening to walk off the show unless they got "mo-money." One of the show's regulars, an unkempt raincoat named David Schwimmer, admonished producers with a warning; he's bowing out of

the series after the fifth season. I guess Dave is speculating on a movie career, even though his debut as a leading man in THE PALL-BEARER was as welcome at the boxoffice as an outbreak of dysentery. Maybe it was something in the air, but I was getting pretty fed-up with Hollywood politics. Careening into the parking lot, I was prepared for a con-

frontation; has success spoiled Athena Massey? Has she transformed from serious actress into surrogate Gabor sister, replete with ruby shades, an entourage, a poodle named Fifi and a beeper? I slammed the car door, tripped an old lady and dropped a "Shut up" on a passing young mother's squealing baby. I was pissed.

Nestled at a corner table in the back of the cafe, a scraggy, bearded derelict polished-off a humongous breakfast and then passed me the business section of his L.A. Times. Politely declining, I observed a young, conservatively-dressed lady carrying a variety of notebooks and a portfolio. She was beaming with self-esteem. It was Ms. Massey or, as she pleasantly insisted, Athena.

Loaded with glossies that drew upon her pulchritudinous prowess (another Hollywood liability—I'm often possessed by Howard Cosell), Athena shared the results of a recent photo shoot. A couple of the shots obliged the hairy guy to drop his newspaper and burble a gagging "Woo-woo." We all shared a laugh. Ice broken, the heat of summer would last forever.

Born in Anaheim, California—Hollywood up the road, Disneyland around the block—Athena matured into a published poet and an admitted romantic. But her first priority was acting.

"As a kid, I enjoyed pretending—playing army or



"Photographer Jan Deen and I collaborated on this vision of yours truly as a vamp. Tailoring our femme fatale for this magazine. We were going for a sensuous feel with the element of blood...and just a pinch of the diabolic."



war. Yes, playing with the boys. And I really loved the fantasy and the make-believe. Always being the entertainer, even as a kid, I'd put on little acting skits for adults. I also really loved watching old musicals back when actors were triple threats, meaning they were actors, dancers and singers. I was especially impressed with the choreographed dance and singing routines. That was inspirational to me. And any time I saw something live, like theater, I just loved it. That energy. Not any singular actor or film really inspired me but I am especially moved by the 1940s, the old black and white films, when men were gentlemen and women were ladies. There is such an elegance about it, the lighting in black and white, it's so beautiful and entertaining and I always wanted to be a part of something like that."

Check out Athena's Southern belle character, Edna, in Showtime's *RED SHOE DIARIES*' episode, "Slow Train." Set in the late 1930s during the depression, one can sense her bond with the past as she intertwines her contemporary psyche with Edna's desperation. Although her flashes of steamy erotica are indeed mesmerizing, it is Athena's obvious passion for the character that ultimately sells the tale.

This past year has been a lucrative one for Athena as the parameters of her career have been incrementally on the increase. It's all part of the equation.

"Well, I have five movies coming up but I'm a little hesitant to speak about them because, as you know, things often fall through. But I have been practicing horseback riding for something I really hope to come through. Yet, there is always a variety of things out there on my plate—but you never know what is actually going to happen.

"However, what I can say is that I have a couple television shows, several commercials in the making, lots of publicity, and I've just fin-

"This characterization is reflective of my dark side. It's fun to get into trouble. Sometimes, I wasn't inspired by Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* or other 'female vampire' icons. I don't emulate—I find characters within myself."

Portrait: Rising Star

During my senior year of Arts Academy, the drama teacher had us prepare a piece for a class called "Voice and Diction." I chose a poem by Kahlil Gibran. "My friend, I am not what I seem..." At the beginning of the semester I recited it with my Texas twang: "Mah freeund, Ah ayum nut whut Ah seeyum..." I was the laughing stock of a Yankee boarding school. Interestingly enough, by the end of the year I had overcome my drawl and scored an A+ in "Voice and Diction." In June, after graduation, I was packing for Hollywood when I received a surprise letter from the hardboiled drama coach. The letter began, "Once every few years a rare talent comes along—" but it ended with, "...avoid porno at all costs!!!"

It was the most mysterious communique I had ever received. "The poor guy," I surmised. "He seemed so sane! I'm the next Katherine Hepburn. Everybody says so. Porno? He must be a nut case." But when I got to Hollywood, they didn't greet me at the airport with, "Welcome, the next Katherine Hepburn! We've been waiting for you!" Instead, Hollywood said what it ritualistically parrots to every young actress: "Take off your dress and smile for the camera." If you say "No," Hollywood says, "I think the Red Onion is hiring." I said, "No." Athena Massey said, "Yes."

I found her by tracking the source of a whiskey voice drifting from the back of the bakery. I recognized the sultry tones from our earlier conversations on the phone. When she turned around, I gasped. Never has such a pretty face posed for my poison pen. Athena Massey evokes flashbacks to

DEAR MS. MASSEY: ARE NUDE SCENES NECESSARY?

BY AMELIA KINKADE



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DOUGLAS KIRKLAND

the Golden Days of Hollywood...that mysterious, long-extinct era. Her face is as fresh as Vivien Leigh's, as naturally beautiful as Liz Taylor's (pre-Jenny Craig). In fact, Ms. Massey recently played Elizabeth Taylor in the movie, JAMES DEAN: RACER WITH DESTINY (Mars Productions, set for release in September.). It may be the only film in Massey's burgeoning career—thus far—to serve as a dramatic gauge of her considerable talent.

For a woman as gorgeous as Massey to be rolling around in the mud (and in the buff) for psycho-melodramas and erotic thrillers is disheartening, to say the least. Of course, every actress harbors the hope that she's "working her way up," though they delude themselves into doing T&A—over and over and over again—by clinging to that contrived ethic; but Athena Massey is not cut from the same cloth. After seeing her in THE RED SHOE DIARIES, I felt as if I had just watched Princess Grace Kelly in PORKY'S.

My first question was my most pressing: Why? "I was BORN naked!" she declared. "Uh-oh," I initially thought, "—she didn't get a letter from her drama coach." The more we talked, however, the truth became increasingly apparent. She's too smart to land the leading lady roles—you know, the kind that usually go to ditsy blondes or naive, non-threatening types. Athena Massey is not blonde, she's not ditsy and she's not innocent, her drive and intelligence polarize the actress from non-threatening roles. Massey is a no-nonsense business woman who works to live and lives to work. She's got a dynamite body



Athena Massey: "Photographer Douglas Kirkland and I are like two kids feeding off each other's energy; we create various images. His photos are fine art—not sex."

and has no qualms whatsoever about showing it.

There are as many variable opinions about nudity as there are actresses who'd volunteer to striptease. No one hands you a manual when you get off the bus entitled *How YOU Make It In Show Business* (but I'll bet my drama coach could have published one). What may qualify as a bad choice for one actress could be parlayed into a shining success by another. Some actresses adhere to the "work begets work" credo, no matter what *kind* of work it is. They hang around on movie sets for the "big break" that eludes them in the Red Onion. Or maybe they'll acquiesce to a five-day wonder to extricate five minutes of good tape—from an other-

wise stink-o film—to use in a demo reel.

Some prefer to forfeit the risk of stereotype by keeping clear of low-budget, "pop-your-top" projects, others believe that the cream rises to the top, no matter what. Massey has been at the churn for a while. Last year, she buttered-up her resume with *THE NUTTY PROFESSOR*. Her role: one of three women in bed with Eddie Murphy.

She showed me her book. Interesting combination of beautiful, sensual nudes, pensively photographed by Douglas Kirkland, that don't erode into exploitation. But then there was a collection of cigarette-laden, crimson-lipped, stiletto-spiked bikini shots that more closely approximated Julie

Strain than Grace Kelly. The transformation was a bit like seeing Joan Chen before and after *Geisha*-girl makeup. Massey's celebrity was initiated with modeling gigs; she successfully sold the smoke n' leather image before tackling the acting profession. It's likely her petite height (5' 5") has been Massey's only deterrent to dethroning Cindy Crawford.

"Athena was the Goddess of wisdom, war and peace," proclaimed Massey, "—so I guess it's important to have the wisdom to know when there should be war, and when there should be peace." Evidently Ms. Massey has chosen to approach her career like she's gone to war. "I'm a Scorpio, too, and Scorpions are known to be fighters." She ain't kidding;

Massey is a consummate martial artist as well. Muggers beware! Other special skills on her resume include handguns, kick-boxing and street-hockey. "A single girl living in this city has got to learn to take care of herself," she said. Massey was too modest to say the key phrase, "A single girl who *looks* like I do..." Quite frankly, I was surprised she could even sit in this bakery for five minutes without getting mobbed. Confiding that all this attention was a long time coming, Massey recounted that she had been a tomboy as a child. Her voluptuous lips were often the target of juvenile derision. "They called me 'bongo lip.' I had to grow into my lips the way a dog has to

continued on page 80

ished shooting my guest star appearance on **STAR TREK: VOYAGER**. Everyone on the set is just great. The episode is called 'Remember.' All I can say is that I am going to be an alien known as an Enaran. I can't tell you about the episode. Just tune in and watch it."

My effort to squeeze further information about her **TREK** gig was rewarded with this addendum. "I'm not a fighting alien, but an engineer and have a bit of a 'love interest' on the show. I'll also be wearing minimal prosthetics. You have just got to watch the show, I don't want to give anything away." I try to weasel a bit more, but she smiles and whispers, "Watch the show."

We concluded our coverage of Athena, eight months ago, as she was packing her gear for Ireland; the actress had been cast in **OTHELLO AND DESDEMONA**. "Unfortunately that project fell through," shrugs Athena, "so I didn't get the opportunity to walk onto a Shakespearean production, which I was really looking forward to. But because I had already done my research into Ireland, Concorde-New Horizons gave me the leading role in what was called, at the time, **SEARCH**, which was later altered to **HE KISSES THE GIRLS AND MAKES THEM DIE** [and subsequently changed to **THE UNSPEAKABLE** for Showtime broadcast]. So I got to go to Ireland anyway, and it was a great experience. Also, because [producer] Roger Corman was very happy with my work, which he viewed in the dailies, he then offered me the leading role in **NOT OF THIS EARTH II**, a dark sci-fi/horror film filled with lots of blood and gore. It used to be called **QUAD-RENA**, the name of the alien character that I played. It'll be shopped to Showtime. We're still in post-production and I still haven't gone in to do the looping."

"In her true form, Quad-Rena is a cross between a jellyfish and a butterfly. Her

ATHENA MASSEY

"My character on STAR TREK: VOYAGER is an Enaran, a new alien species introduced on the series. Wearing minimal prosthetics, I'm not a fighter, but an engineer and love interest."



STAR TREK, VOYAGER Massey as a fleet engineer and Garrett Wong ("Kim"). "Garrett was a sweetheart, he has a knack for comedy. I play his love interest."

spaceship crashes on Earth, where she takes over the body of a girl named Sarah. Sarah is actually a prostitute who is committing suicide. So now she gets a second chance at life while Quad-Rena is fulfilling her mission, which is to acquire blood samples in an attempt to save her planet. I get hit on the head with a beer bottle, which knocks me out, then I give myself a blood transfusion. Of course, I don't use a needle—that's too easy and not painful enough—so instead I use a hollowed Bic pen." The hairy guy with the *L.A. Times* laughs. Athena says to him, "Well, it was a first for me." Silence. Then we all laugh. He abruptly leaves. No tip.

One quickly discovers that Athena is very personable, yet quite private. She'll lift the window to her past, but only a crack: "My parents divorced when I was very young, and I really have no memory of my parents being together. It was definitely difficult growing up in a divorced family, but I still hold on to that fantasy

of that nuclear family where the mom and dad are together and everybody loves each other. I eventually want to get married, have kids, two big dogs for companionship and security, a big yard." Then she laughingly quips, "No picket fence, I hate picket fences. I want to have space, privacy and stability, my own little castle. Monetarily, I hope for more stable work so I can do what is important to me."

"I don't have any dogs at the moment because I'm just so busy. It's not fair to the dog if you don't have time to give it the love it needs. Similarly, I don't have a boyfriend because the job makes it difficult dating and trying to develop a relationship. Plus, it's hard to meet a good person, one who is compatible with similar likes and needs. I try to keep away from dating actors because I don't think that makes a good math equation. I prefer someone who is supportive of my career."

Athena has also recently co-starred in the third installment of a certain "erotic thriller" saga: "We just had

the wrap party for **POISON IVY 3**, so I'm not sure when it will be out. However, in the film, I play Rebecca, a housekeeper who is having an affair with the man of the house and he unfortunately catches me in bed with the pool cleaner. I then get nailed in the face. No wait, they fight each other. I've been hit so many times in other films, including **UNDERCOVER** and **VIRTUAL COMBAT**, that I forget which ones. The pool guy gets fired, then—as we are arguing—the guy's wife shows up so I lose my job. Although I don't like erotic thrillers, I liked the script and I really wanted to work with director Kurt Voss [**HORSEPLAYER** and **GENUINE RISK**, the latter an erotic 1940s crime story]. I am not the lead in this film, I just wear this little plain-Jane housekeeper's uniform. Another character, Violet, does all that erotic stuff. Although I did do a small love scene."

Though initially avoiding overtly sexy films, Athena opted for a couple of sensuous characterizations after risking stereotype in juvenile roles. She offers *FF* readers an insider's "expose" on the performance of impassioned scenes: "I don't

STAR TREK, VOYAGER As Jaseen, one of the Enaran breed, Massey required less than 2 hours of makeup.



have a hard time doing love scenes. They're never what people think they are. In fact, they are quite technical. Hopefully, if we have done our job right, people will go 'Wow!' But if you were actually on the set you'd see how awkward, funny and technical everything is. Each scene is different and every experience is different. Sometimes, I've done a love scene with someone I either didn't like or didn't feel comfortable with, and, of course, that's more difficult. But it can be great when you get along and things click.

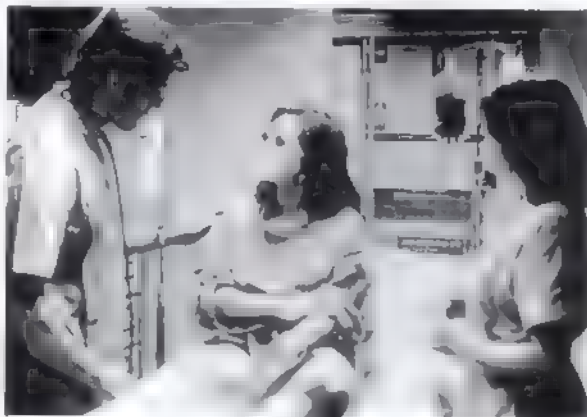
"However, most of the time you're just trying to listen to the director's directions. It can be difficult to hear him while you are trying to be passionate, sexy and provocative. And at the moment, all you can hear in the background is, 'Arch your back. No, to your left. Now to your right. There you go. All right, now put your hand down.' So you're trying to listen to all of this while trying to kiss this guy. So then I'm thinking [comical raspy voice], 'How can I concentrate while you are giving me all these directions?'"

"Besides, they are filmed without sound, so later on, they are dubbed and they can lay in the music and other sounds. It's funny, though; usually I'll dub in my own breathing, but on *THE UNSPEAKABLE*, which I just finished looping, they were telling me about a gentleman who would be coming in to do my love efforts. I said, 'Wait a minute you have a guy coming in to do my kisses?' They said, 'No one is going to know that it's a guy kissing his own hand, or an orange doing the sounds. If you want we can get a female to kiss her hand.' I said, 'Well only if he is good.'"

She's no slouch on television, what with credits that include *SEINFELD*, *MURDER ONE*, *THE LARRY SANDERS SHOW*, *DOOGIE HOWSER, M.D.* and *THE YOUNG AND THE REST-*

ATHENA MASSEY

"Roger Corman, screening the dailies for *THE UNSPEAKABLE*, was very happy with my work. He then offered me *NOT OF THIS EARTH II*, a dark sci-fi film with lots of blood and gore."



Massey as a vampire in *NOT OF THIS EARTH II*. "After I've fainted, doctors blissfully feed my addiction—blood! I enjoyed working with director Jon Purdy."

LESS. Between pictures, Athena has shot commercials (Coca-Cola, Coppertone) and, just prior to her "leading lady" elevation, played a small role in this year's sleeper hit, *THE NUTTY PROFESSOR*. "Eddie Murphy was, of course, really funny. The highlight of working with him was that after he has done the takes a couple of times—the way it is supposed to be done—he gets to improvise and go off on a tangent. That's when his talent really shines through. I play one of his love interests when he changes into the Buddy Love character. He finds me and two girlfriends at the Ritz. He shacks up with us. We go back to his house and party, then end up in bed with him." She teasingly smiles, "Three of us girls. Of course, it's all very innocent."

Turning contemplative, I ask Athena something about her professional growth, but my inquiry is lost in the grinding choke of a cappuccino machine. She heard only the operative word of my question. "Growth? Well, my butt and stomach have got-

ten bigger," she quips. "Leftovers from Ireland. I returned with a beer belly and a dairy butt. Actually, I've recently been adding a lot of comedy to my repertoire as an actress. To work is to train. Every time I'm doing a job, I say to myself afterwards, 'Okay, great. What did I learn from that, what did I get from it and how can I be better?' I can use those insights to make my next project even better. I've never regretted anything, because everything has been a great learning experience and I'm always happy to work I keep moving forward, like I did in Ireland. I'll ask the directors, and director of photography, what advice can they give me to help me improve as an actress."

Actresses and actors may capitalize on their hardbodies to inaugurate a footing in the industry. However, the resultant roles are inconsequential; and when the looks fade, so do careers. Once upon a time, Massey's tempestuous appeal earned her correlative sexpot char-

acters. But she eschewed the "bombshell" facade for an adherence to method acting. Sample the research related to her role in *THE UNSPEAKABLE*: "In the film, I'm playing a homicide detective named Alice who goes undercover searching for love and a serial killer. I first familiarized myself with the guns that we were going to use in the film. As it turned out, however, we didn't use any of them."

"But at least we were prepared. I ended up using a fake .45. I next went down to the Beverly Hills Police Department and interviewed the detectives. They were very helpful showing me all of the undercover vehicles and equipment they used. They showed me around the office, and took me to their 'Circle of Love' in the morning; that's where they talk about what cases they're all working on and share each other's information. One detective's information may be helpful to another. They explained to me many details, like their procedures for interviewing suspects and for tracking down serial killers. I talked to them about line-ups and about some of the undercover work that they do."

"I also started reading *On the Track of Murder*. It's a book that follows a N.Y. homicide group on 12 cases that they were following. Some were solved and some were not. It follows their personal lives and careers as they try to solve these cases. And some of the cases were similar to the cases that my film character was following. The police were very helpful and treated me as part of their family."

Athena's agent, Stephen Veal of the Media Artists Group, offers a few humble words about his client. He communicates his admiration sans the P.T. Barnum hyperbole. Matter of fact, his voice resonates with a downright paternal affection: "I know this may sound the usual, but Athena is the hottest personality I



"One of my poses for photographer Douglas Kirkland, a wonderful, wonderful man. He has a sense of vision and truth. I don't like taking direction from photographers. Doug allows me the liberty of personal expression."

represent. She always prepares herself well, and is very driven and dedicated to her work. She can do the sexy stuff, drama, action and comedy. Basically she can do it all."

Athena acknowledges her longevity is dependent upon "many ingredients to success. A lot of it is timing, your work begets more work. Training and experience are critical. Each job will hopefully make me understand my craft more and make me better, and help me fine-tune my work and stay in focus. I take my work very seriously and I'm really anal about my homework and doing my research."

My eyes pop: "Anal?" We laugh. She replies, "Yes, anal." Surprised, I utter, "I don't think I've heard it used that way." She explains, "It's short for being anal retentive, which means being very thorough. It does not mean up the butt. *Make sure we clarify that.* So I'm just very efficient and thorough about my homework. No butts about it." We roar with laughter—

"Basically I love learning. Once a director told me that I was 'autodidactic,' meaning I'm constantly educating myself. I think I am. I love knowledge, learning, reading and experiencing as much as I can. I went to Santa Monica College and Santa Barbara College briefly. Education is very important, maybe not necessarily having a degree in anything, that's just a piece of paper. But things like book knowledge are wonderful and street knowledge is even more important. And what I mean by that is actual life experience. Getting out doing things, exposing yourself to people with different cultures and a variety of different interests."

She ought to know. A seasoned voyager, Athena spent two months modeling in Japan just before she was inundated with a windfall of film roles. But years ago, when she was only flirting

ATHENA MASSEY

"I don't have a hard time with love scenes. They're quite technical. Most of the time you're listening to the director, 'Arch your back. To your left. Now to your right. There you go.'"



Massey in *THE UNSPEAKABLE* (formerly *SEARCH*): "Me as a homicide sleuth with suspected serial killer, David Chokachi, working with the cast and crew."

with an acting career, Athena embarked on a cross-cultural odyssey; an 11-month journey that included England, Wales, France, Holland, Germany and Italy. And, baby—to paraphrase Lou Reed—she seriously took a walk on the wild side. Athena leans back, raises an eyebrow and noddingly grins as she prepares to share part of her Jack Kerouac mentality.

"I was very much into punk rock. I did all those kind of things, like having a mohawk, a shaved head, the calico hair, deadlocks, the works. Yes. I got carried away and pierced my ears 12 times and now I only have 11 holes in my ears. I didn't get the tattoo I was very close to getting—I'm glad now, naturally. [*wryly smiling*] I would have regretted that when you consider it would have been a big corn on the cob on my stomach. Perhaps it was that Maytag washing machine on my butt. Well, you know you can't get the typical wall art. Just kidding. I really just love music, art and I still do.

"I also used to write for four underground fanzines in L.A., Chicago, and Europe. I even had my own magazine that was written in four languages where I was the writer, distributor, and publisher. I also did photography for record covers and lyric sheets, helped set up gigs for local bands, and traveled around Europe as a roadie and sang back up vocals for the English band, The Instigators. It was a period of two years.

"I didn't smoke or drink and I wasn't the kind of punk that was destructive. In fact, I was very productive. Most of my friends were what you called 'straight edge.' I don't like the label, but it means you don't drink, smoke, or anything like that. But I loved the scene because it was a creative outlet for me, and it was actually a very positive time. I loved that whole part of my life because it was all like a family. We were all loving and supportive of each other and it gave me a sense of unity, something that fulfilled a void that I had in my personal life. But it got to a point

after so many years that I felt that the time, money and energy that I was investing into these things just wasn't working out. I realized that I just wanted to become more focused on acting, so I got into that."

And acting she did, tallying appearances in more than 10 feature films, 10 television shows, three theater presentations, 18 video productions and 14 commercials. But her dialogue, ripe with philosophical foresight, is bereft of self-aggrandizing: "For me, there is a feeling I get inside when I do something I really love and enjoy. I get a certain high that pushes me to continue working on things that make me feel good. I hope to eventually do a TV series because it's steady work and, in that way, I can stay home in L.A. Furthermore, what's great about a series is one can really explore different things.

"And when I get pregnant [*laughs*], which won't be for a while—I'd like to do more voice overs. Because of the physical changes, I'd be limited to the types of roles I can play. So with voice over work, I could do radio commercials, books on tape, and television and film animation. For an audition you don't have to dress up or do your hair, you just lay down your tracks and that's that."

Finally, there's the name. Both parents claim credit for christening their offspring as Athena, drawing inspiration from a mythological crusader dubbed the Goddess of War: "Those are pretty big shoes to fill [*laughs*]. No, I am not a goddess, but I do draw from some of her virtues. Athena, in Greek mythology, is the Goddess of wisdom, war and peace. I think a little part of me is a warrior. I mean I was quite the tomboy growing up and getting into fights. I love the wisdom aspect and therefore, strive to see what can I learn from experience. I love knowledge, and wisdom comes from everything. But I think

with success I find that sometimes I am a little more defensive, because definitely people start coming out of the woodwork and I think, 'What is it that you want? Now you have so much interest, when before you didn't.' So acting is a home away from home. But sometimes I don't see where work stops and my personal life starts. It's sort of a blur."

I ask her if that's an indication that perhaps she is still trying to find herself. "Find myself?" she quips. "I never knew I was lost. I have always been here. No matter where I go, there I am. Seriously though, I don't think I need to go out and find myself. I am very happy with who I am. And who am I? A girl like any other girl, I have my goals and dreams and I am working towards them."

Dreaming is for free, which is fortunate for those not willing to pay the price. But Athena Massey not only knows the cost, but is ready to bear the expense. As we drifted into the parking lot, I asked her, "Where are you off to?" Gliding into the driver's seat of her car, Athena matter-of-factly replied, "Russia. I'm making a film there titled TERMINATION MAN. Terrific cast of character actors, what with Steve Railsback, Michael Ironside and James Farentino. I play a Special-Force agent who's very much down to business. She meets up with this womanizer and says, 'Your reputation precedes you—and I am not in the market.' I like that!"

Just one more thing. "Athena, given your choice of roles, what would you like to play?" Perhaps leaning on her namesake, she replies, "I love mythological creatures. Dragons, pirates and all. So I'd love to play a fantasy character, something completely make-believe. And I'd keep in mind that ole' adage, 'never play leapfrog with a unicorn' " □



"This sanguine concept was not influenced by Quid-Rena, whom I play in NOT OF THIS EARTH II; though a vampire, she has purity and innocence. No, this photo probes into the contrariety of a woman who savors blood lust."

EMMANUELLE KRISTA ALLEN

QUEEN OF THE GALAXY! SHE'S SCORCHIN' SCI-FI ON TV (IN 3-D!)
AND COOKIN' ROGER CORMAN'S SALTY SPOOK-SAGA.

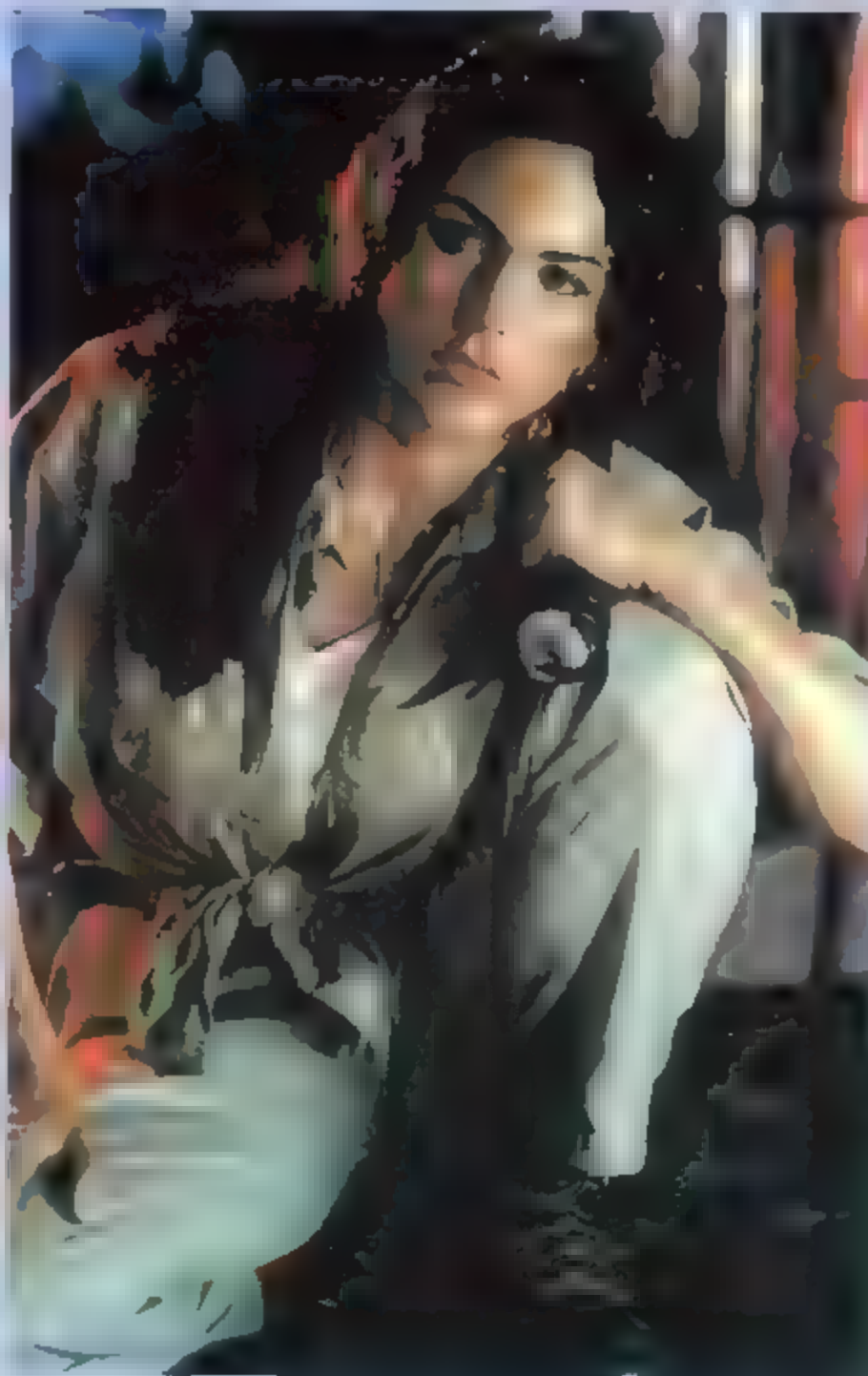
BY DAN SCAPPEROTTI

Hollywood, she's one tough town. . . especially if you're one of thousands of photogenic women in search of an acting career. Shuffling through a surfeit of casting agents, they're exiled to decorative, uncredited bits ("girl on the beach")—fleeting photo-graphed, no dialogue. The



"bits" linger on until the starlets surrender themselves to their daytime jobs, or turn 30 and involuntarily vacate the business to make room for a younger clone. Only certain exceptions earn billing or screen visibility beyond a blip.

Krista Allen is one of the exceptions. Only a year out of the starting gate, she's tallied plum roles in eight movies and a profusion of



THE HAUNTED SEA. Divorcing herself from *Emmanuelle*, Allen turned terminator. One problem: her nemesis (!) reminded Allen of "Barney having a bad day."

TV appearances.

Migrating from Texas, where she was studying for a teaching degree, Allen arrived in Los Angeles with no acting experience. Nevertheless, her sultry presence earned Allen a gig on *THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL* (FF 4.3) and a role in a Roger Corman production, *DEADLY GAMES*. Her tempestuous appeal subsequently qualified Allen as the heir to *Emmanuelle*, the bisexual coquette often linked to actress Sylvia Kristel. But Allen's spin on the the sex libertine was transposed to a sci-fi environment; playing the title role as *EMMANUELLE, QUEEN OF THE GALAXY*, Allen extended the character's longevity with seven feature-length films, shot in exotic locations such as Paris, China, South America and Thailand.

"It was pretty much a whirlwind," said Allen with mixed emotions. "It was a great experience. The pyramids at Giza are beautiful. The Great Wall of China was, well, great. We saw tons of things. We shot a lot of the studio stuff in Ireland which is very beautiful and, being of Irish decent, I felt that I was home."

"EMMANUELLE is really



EMMANUELLE, QUEEN OF THE GALAXY orbits the lustrous heroine into "close encounters" with aliens. "In the love scenes," says Allen, "I was Emmanuelle—not Krista. With time, everybody got more comfortable—especially me."



Allen describes *GALAXY QUEEN* as "an awakening experience. Many of the people I was with had been acting for years, and here I am—fresh off the Texas farm—the star of the show! I had been in L.A. only a month. Oh, my God!"

the very first important thing I ever did. It's a huge thing to be the star of a show and having never acted in your life. On the TV soap, *THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL*, I didn't have that many lines. I was nervous as can be. I went in for the day and left the same day. *EMMANUELLE* was a completely different thing. 'Be on your toes because you're going to be going through countries and working in different studios.' I was so nervous at first, especially with the content of the movie.

"I'm not a real inhibited person. It was a little difficult, at first, because I was doing all these love scenes. Even though I'm a very open person, and believe in being sexy and expressing your sexuality, it was hard. What constitutes Krista Allen is something that's very sexy, which is probably why I got *EMMANUELLE*. The directors were really, really good to me and worked with me. During every love scene I was Emmanuelle, I wasn't Krista; I was my character, so it was okay. After the scene was done, maybe I had a little more of 'Oh, my God!' The way it was shot was very classy."

Allen describes Andrea Rosotto, the series' director of photography, as "the most wonderful guy in the world. He'd always give me a thumbs-up from behind the camera and a big smile and say, 'You look wonderful' or 'That's great.' Or, if I did something wrong, he'd say, 'Okay, try something different.' I had the director of photography and the director on my side. Everybody was wonderful and I stress that with exclamation points. I can't always say that. And Alain Sirtzky, the series' producer, was like my dad on the trip."

The series, a softcore sexual odyssey, required stretches of nudity and impassioned love scenes. "As time went on, everybody got a whole lot more comfortable with the thing—especially me," grins Allen. "Many of the people I was with had been acting for

years and here I am, fresh off the farm from Texas, and, okay, I'm the star of the show. I'm ready to do it. It was a huge awakening experience for me. I remember thinking back to myself saying, 'Oh my God, I'm the star of the movie and I've been in Los Angeles a month'."

Embodying the Emmanuelle character, Allen navigates a cabal of extraterrestrials through an itinerary of earthly revelry. Applying high-tech devices to their heads, the aliens monitor the carnal communication between Emmanuelle and her alien "donors" (I'm trying to be subtle here, okay?). Even her dreams are "exposed" to the Martian vessel's crew.

Pressed to describe the outer space colonists, Allen notes, "They look like humans, but they talk a little funnier. Also, they can morph into different people and they have this 'transmuter' thing that allows them to transport, back and forth, between Earth and their spaceship."

The spacecraft's cloaking device camouflages it from earthly detection. A blunder, however, renders the ship vulnerable to the the National Security Agency: that's right, it's the cue for a chase scene—

"One of the aliens, a silly one named Theo, spills a soda on the console of the spaceship," explains Allen. "It blows an entire circuit out. He's the funniest thing in the whole movie. Suddenly, this big spaceship can be seen by everybody. Now the government knows there's something out there, and they continue to look for it in other episodes. Finally, they do find us and they send agents to get the aliens."

Emmanuelle's erotic close encounters blend with nocturnal fantasy in the *Perchance to Dream* episode. "I'm dreaming, and the aliens come around to see what I'm dreaming about because aliens don't dream," explains Allen. "So they're all around me and I walk into the room and it's a

"What constitutes Krista Allen is something very sexy, which is probably why I landed the role. I believe in expressing your sexuality, but love scenes are hard."



EMMANUELLE GALAXY: Allen (l), probed by aliens who "look human, but morph into different people," is transported on a martian vessel (r).

dream within a dream with-in a dream. The aliens are all in my dream. It's really freaky. I find this crystal ball and a genie comes out, and decides he can grant me all my wishes. Remember, this is a dream.

"When he tries to introduce himself, it's really funny because he can't speak right. Finally, he asks what I want. At first, I don't believe him. When he tells me he's a genie, I say something like, 'Yeah, and I'm the Queen of Sheba' and he hits his chest and suddenly I'm dressed in this Queen of Sheba outfit. Then I believe him and say, 'I want to be out of this ridiculous costume' so he hits his chest again and I'm completely naked. 'Put some clothes on me!' So he puts something else on me. 'Something more appropriate for dinner.' So he hits his chest again and I'm dressed for dinner. Wow."

Some of the burlesque schtick was already fossilized when originally uncrated for the likes of *BOWERY TO BAGHDAD* (1955, and Benny Hill. Sample the scene where Emmanuelle wishes that she'd be swept off her feet by the man of her dreams; naturally, a British hunk mystically materializes with a bouquet of flowers and literally picks up our heroine. "He's holding me and asking, 'Am I holding you too low, too high, too low, too high?'" smiles Allen. "Frustrated, I just say 'Oh, just disappear!' He does, and I drop to the floor with a big thud." Yep, it's *I DREAM OF JEANNIE*, David Friedman-style; however, unlike its adult competition, *EMMANUELLE* doesn't objectify its sex by degenerating the heroine into a prop. She's the straight woman, or second banana, in the precursor to sex n' slapstick—vaude-

ville. Say good night, Gracie.

And those whacky aliens? They badger Emmanuelle to chronicle her hammock rides with the dream man. Their exasperated passenger explodes, audibly wishing they could physically relate to her orgasmic fantasies. "All of a sudden, we're sitting at a table and the entire table turns into this huge orgy," chuckles Allen. "I'm sitting there with the genie and watching all the aliens have sex. It's silly stuff like that, but it's a fun series."

Emmanuelle's private lesson for stalwart martian commander Haffron (Paul Michael Robinson): their relationship must be devoid of personal commitment. But, as

we've learned from *UNEARTHLY STRANGER*, *THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH*, and *TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE*, aliens who experience human emotions, must also suffer the consequences.

"Throughout the first couple of episodes," explains Allen, "Haffron experiences sex, jealousy, lust and rage for the first time. So there are lessons in every episode. And there are repercussions as a result of these feelings. If you do something bad to somebody, something bad may happen to you. He learns it's silly to be jealous about somebody."

Lush production values afforded the series a gimmick that's sure to make rival TV erotica look comparatively flat. "There are a lot of love scenes," notes Allen, "—after all, this is *EMMANUELLE*! The love scenes were shot in 3-D



EMMANUELLE/GALAXY: Allen is the subject of alien experimentation. "My dreams stoke the curiosity of the extraterrestrials, because they don't dream!"

They used a special camera for it. We'd play with the camera a lot. I might have to do things like put my hand out toward the camera, and the sets were designed specifically for a third dimensional optical process—you know, beads hanging, and candles in the foreground or background."

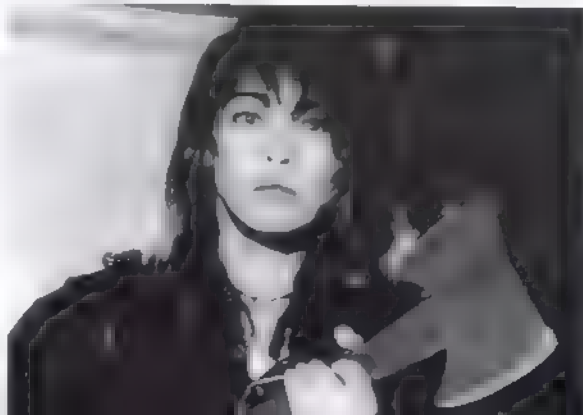
So, when the cameras shut down, did Allen do more than soak-in the European scenery? "I was so guarded in those places," sighs the actress. "We literally shot for so many hours a day that, by the time it came for a wrap, everybody was too tired. We had to be up the next morning, and I had to be ready and know my lines. I was such a good girl. I did everything I was supposed to."

"The crew became my family. We ate at great restaurants and had some great times in different cities and countries. For the most part, it was all work. We got it done pretty quickly. The crew was so much fun but professional at the same time; there was nothing that went on."

Allen honed her acting

aptitude via experience and the supervision of series director L.L. Shapira. "As the episodes go along, they get funnier and funnier. I like drama, but I love comedy. The whole EMMANUELLE thing was my school, it was my training. I learned so much. The director took time to help me out. They all knew that I was so new and they gave me the opportunity to act on my own. They gave me lots of insight and they believed in me. Of course, in the future, I hope to get more challenging roles. I've gotten so much work since then. I worked on

THE HAUNTED SEA (formerly GHOST SHIP): Allen slipped into black hair dye and a Spanish accent as the assertive heroine who's the film's sole survivor



"There's a lot of love scenes—after all, this is EMMANUELLE!—which were shot 3-D. We'd play with the camera. Our sets were tailored to the optical process."

about 12 different series, including DIAGNOSIS MURDER, SILK STALKINGS, PACIFIC BLUE and WEIRD SCIENCE."

Upon her return to Los Angeles, Allen was promptly cast in THE HAUNTED SEA (formerly GHOST SHIP), a Roger Corman production that one insider described as "ALIEN takes an ocean cruise." Allen plays Amanda Medina, daughter of a shipping magnate who's recruited as second mate on a perilous voyage. Her hair dyed black, replete with curly coif, Allen slipped into a Spanish accent as the assertive heroine.

"Amanda decides she is going to go out on this ship and be one of the crew," explains Allen. "It's her first time out so she gets a lot of flack from Burgren, the first mate played by Joanna Pacula [THE KISS, WARLOCK: THE ARMAGEDDON]. All my character wants is some respect. James Brolin plays the captain. She gets a lot of flack from this sleazy guy named Delgado, who's turning into a monster during this whole thing. He's always talking about banging chicks and giving Amanda a hard time. They detect

this ship coming right at them. Amanda volunteers to go on this ship that's not on the radar."

Boarding the abandoned tub, Delgado exhumes a treasure of solid gold. Unlike her cash-hungry comrades, Amanda—a student of antiquity—suggests the booty should be deserted. But noooooo...

"They end up stealing the treasure against Amanda's wishes," reveals Allen. "If you touch one of the jewels, you get a shock and are jolted into a trance. Somehow, Delgado turns into the monster. Everyone begins dying, whacked by the beast."

As the body count mounts, Allen—the sole survivor—eludes the monster by leaping into the drink only seconds before the ship bursts into flames: "At the end, I'm floating in the water and the ship explodes behind me. I open my eyes and I have snake-like retinas; I've become the monster." One suspects the film was a dramatic challenge for the actress; Allen just wasn't intimidated by the slimy predator. "The monster looks like Barney possessed," she laughs, "—y'know, like Barney having a real bad day."

Allen's skin contusions, however, were considerably less artificial. "I had to shoot an M-16 a lot," she recounts, "because I'm the only one with a gun. The running, falling and fighting were the hardest parts because I did a lot of my own stunts. I had bruises all over me. I also got banged up doing some fights with the monster. They were probably my least favorite scenes, just because I didn't know what I was doing."

The conclusive plunge from the ship is followed by

long shots of a stunt double buoyantly afloat in the water. But Allen submerged herself in the deep for tighter shots: "They had me clinging to a crate out in the water. But they did the scene, with the closeup of my snake eyes, on this set in a big barrel filled with water and the ADs were standing around making the water ripple."

Yep, Allen is on a roll. She recently wrapped post-production on *RAVEN*, cast as Cali, she's abducted by Burt Reynolds who vows to liberate the comely captive if only her shady fiancé will abet in the recovery of a certain organization's \$50 million device. But there's a twist: "It turns out that my character really works for the CIA," nods Allen, "and I've been after these two guys for a year. So the whole thing was a lie, and I was never in love with this man. John Enos was supposed to play it but he got fired, two days into production, for creative differences. So they brought in Matt Battaglia, who ended up playing my fiancé."

Required to perform the film's final scenes as "a raving bitch," Allen drew upon her makeshift training. "I am such a *non-bitch*," she insists. "It was so hard. I always play the really good girl. This time, I wasn't a heroine. At the very end, I'm looking my fiancée in the face and he's completely in love with me and I'm telling him, '*I never loved you and, by the way, this ring that you got me sucks. Take it back.*' I had to turn from this really sweet Cali to this bitch. At the end, I get blown up in my car so it's my first death on screen."

Next thing you know, Allen whips out of her chair; she salutes me "goodbye," hops in her car and careens to the set of *LIAR LIAR*, a Jim Carrey movie, to perform a small but significant role. Drop dead gorgeous. Ebullient. Nice sense of humor, too. I sadly resign myself to the fact that the next time I see Krista Allen—*Up This Close*—will be from behind a pair of 3-D specs. □



EMMANUELLE/GALAXY QUEEN: "The episodes get progressively funnier and funnier. I love comedy. You just go out there and get kind of crazy. The whole series was my school. In the future, I hope to get more challenging roles."



CRITTERS COP A KILLIN' ATTITUDE IN BLACK COMEDY.

BY BRUCE G. HALLENBECK

She's bleaching the Troma aroma and, personally, we hope she'll exile the company's terry cloth ciphers—The Toxic Avenger, Sgt. Kabukiman, etc.—to extinction. C'mon, Troma. Please ordain Priscilla Basque as your mascot. A hybrid of Hawaiian, Chinese and Portuguese descent, Basque has earned a myriad of handles in beauty competitions; the first runner-up in the Miss Hawaii pageant, she's been christened Miss Honolulu, Miss Diamond Head and Miss Kona. Apparently exhausting her Hawaiian venue, Basque flew to New York and was cast in *BUGGED*, which is likely to be Troma's most pixilated pick-up since their Belgian acquisition, *RABID GRANNIES*.

"Actually, I moved to L.A. from Hawaii, first," Basque explains. "I wanted to be a singer. I sent my resume to Arista Records, and, although they didn't pick me up for a contract right then and there, I was told that if I was ever in New York to look them up. So I moved to New York."

A demo record and a couple of underground discs later, Basque warbled *Summertime*, which debuted on the Republic Records label. "That song is now #1 in Hawaii," she enthuses. "It was reviewed in *Billboard* and it's really building momentum. I signed 200 autographs the other day at the Virgin Megastore, and I have a deal with MCA Records pending. It's all happening pretty fast."

Okay, but I'm saddled with only one page of copy. How about those mutant crickets? "*BUGGED* was so much fun to do. I play this poet named Dee, who



A terrified Priscilla Basque begs for rescue from *BUGGED*'s Ron Armstrong.

lives in Greenwich Village. She decides to move to Long Island, where she develops this bug problem. You see, the bugs keep getting smarter until they eventually take over her house."

Exempting Ms. Basque, the film's cast and crew was entirely African-American. Producer/director Ron Armstrong plays a major role in the film. "This movie took three years out of my life," Basque exclaims. "We'd shoot whenever we could until the money ran out and then we'd have a break, go back,


and start the whole process all over again. Finally, three years later, Troma picked us up for release. It's been a long road, but a lot of fun."

Basque, in fact, was only ticked by some fraternization with her noxious costars. "There was one bug scene where the bugs—most of them were actually little, mechanical critters—were all over me, chirping on me and biting me. Well, I writhed around so much that I smashed my head into the camera. Actually, the cameraman and I were both rushed to the hospital. They checked us out and we were okay—but we were really bugged!"

Though she voluntarily hawks her appearance in a movie spin-off of *THE NEWLYWED GAME*, Basque is reluctant to divulge the story of her current project, *FAST PITCH IN SEARCH OF AMERICA*.

So which mode of creativity does the comely cricket conductor prefer? "I'm just an entertainer," grins Basque. "I may be a better actress than a singer. I don't know, but I love both. My purpose in life is to sing, to perform, to make people happy. As for the audience response, acting may be better especially on stage. Right now, I'm concentrating on music, trying to get into the guts of it."

Nailing her age at "23 to the highest power," Basque waxes philosophically about life on earth—and elsewhere. "I believe in reincarnation. I think that self-centered souls miss the boat. Self-controlled souls come back serene and enlightened. As for me, I just want to concentrate on being myself and see where it all leads." □



Self-described as "drug and alcohol free," Basque's natural high "is just being myself." Will the Big Apple eventually lose the Hawaiian siren? "I'll be here as long as I'm here," she replies. "Then, like an old soul, I'll move on."

thuy trang

the CROW II

A "MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGER" CHALLENGED THE CROW.
HER NEXT ROUND WILL BE VERSUS HOLLYWOOD.

BY FREDERICK C. SZEBIN

Listen up. Don't dismiss Thuy Trang because she played the original Yellow Ranger on MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS. It's easy to scoff at a kiddie show veteran, but it's a bum rap. Something as successful as THE POWER RANGERS can be a mixed blessing to



a thespian; once a tenure with a popular series has expired, an actress rationally expects her triumph to residually slide into subsequent projects. But, sometimes, her celebrity is burdened with professional consequences...

"THE POWER RANGERS was a help and a hindrance," Trang admits. "It's like I'm a ghost. I believe



Cast as calculating Kali in THE CROW sequel, Trang launched her career as "high school kid" Trini, one of the MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS (P)

that I exist and have the power to move things, and people can see the things moving but they can't really see who's doing it. In a way I exist, and then I don't. I want to break away from that, really shine and say, 'Here I am. I'm real. I really exist.' I'm not just fighting from coming off a kid's show, but I'm also fighting from the point of view of an Asian. That's another battle I have to go through. I'm not going to sit back and say, 'Ok, that's it and there's nothing I can do about it.' By fighting it, I'm going to gain strength and power, moral determination to get where I'm going because this is what I want to do."

Her inner strength was forged by a tortured childhood. Trang was born in Saigon, 1973. Bad timing. Within two years, her homeland was invaded by Communist monarchs. Trang's father managed to escape, leaving his family behind.

Throughout the rest of the 1970s, Trang witnessed the living Hades of post-war Vietnam; the Communist corruption of the socialist government, the multitudes of war orphans living on the streets. She, her siblings and mother finally boarded a boat to Hong Kong, but



Cunning as Kai. "When I read the **CROWN CITY OF ANGELS** script, I thought, 'This femme fatale is so dark and more mature.' There's much more life for this character than **POWER RANGERS**. It was like a 180-degree turn."



Trang nearly died on the voyage. She was force fed by her mother, who refused to toss the ailing toddler overboard.

Hong Kong can be a hell on earth for immigrants and the family wasn't spared the repercussions. Embroiled in a similar situation, it's likely many of us would surrender to oppression; Trang, however, developed a thick-skinned resistance to self-pity. Finally landing in America, the sev-

en-year-old youngster joined up with her father, but the reunion was short-lived, he passed away, two years later (1982), the victim of cancer. Unencumbered by neighboring prejudice, Trang adapted to the culture and language. Though she resides in Southern California, the actress nostalgically leaks that her family resides "back home" in Vietnam.

By the late 1980s, Trang enrolled at Irvine But dra-

CROW: CITY OF ANGELS. Trang, as a callous assassin, intimidates Noah (Ian Dury, inset); she's abetted by her partner in crime, Curve (Iggy Pop). Director Tim Pope was "very giving."

matic arts wasn't on her agenda; she opted to major in civil engineering. "My dad was an engineer," Trang explains. "My sister graduated with an engineering degree at UCLA, and then my brother went to UCLA for engineering. So it was just a pattern: 'Thuy has to go into engineering.'"

"A lot of my friends lived in this area—Beverly Hills, Melrose and Hollywood. On the weekends I would come down and hang out with them. A few of them wanted to break into acting. One day, I just tagged along with a friend as he went around to see agents. One person said, 'Go see what this agent can do for you.' I went in and this guy [Frank Glass] said, 'Do you have any head shots? Any experience? Any training?' I said, 'No. No. No.' [laughs] He

just stared at me and said, 'Well, there's nothing I can do for you [laughs].'"

Trang recruited her younger brother to photograph some head shots. Picking-up the prints from a one-hour lab, she returned to the agent with her glossies. The aspirant actress found work in commercials, and was eventually offered her choice of a feature film or a new Fox television series. Speculating a TV series would furnish her with steady employment, Trang chose **THE PHANTOMS** which was later modified to **THE MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS**.

"The initial reading was just a huge cattle call," relates Trang. "The producers didn't know what they wanted. There were hundreds and hundreds of girls: Caucasian girls, Hispanic girls and a few sprinkles of Asian girls. I didn't know what to expect at all. I thought, 'Ok, I'll go in there, wing it, do my best and just have fun.' Out of all those hundreds of girls, I didn't know what my chances were."

Earlier in her young life, at her father's insistence, Trang had become involved with kung-fu for self-defense purposes. As a practitioner of the martial art, she edged-out her competition. Trang survived the call-backs, met with Fox personnel and was drafted into training with the other cast members. Upon completion of the first season, the network was handing-out cigars, the **POWER RANGERS** scored huge Nielsen ratings.

"The producers came on the set and said, 'Congratulations, you guys are number one!'" Trang recalls. "Everybody looked around in shock! From that point on, we were number one all the way through—until some of us left, and the producers got other kids to replace the original gang."

But a **POWER RANGERS** movie spin-off languished at the boxoffice. And sales behind the merchandising franchise, which had formerly prompted riots in toy

stores, has cooled. "I think it's still doing quite all right, but not as well," says Trang. "There's a lot of factors involved; it could be because the kids are getting tired of it, or because the chemistry is not working well with the new group. The producers have been contacting me to come back to the show."

Trang kicked alien butt for two years before she, and Black Ranger co-star Walter Jones, bid adieu to the series. "I left the show for a lot of reasons," she says. "I really wanted to take my career seriously. I didn't want to be typecast doing kid's stuff. I wanted to expand into other roles, and show the industry what I'm capable of as an actress. Yeah, I could have stayed with the show for another two years and keep steady money coming in. Either that or just leave the show and try to prove myself."

"In this industry, coming off that show, people look at me like, 'Sure, you're coming off a number one show, but it's a kid's show. So what?' It wasn't an advantage. If anything, it was a disadvantage because I have to prove what I'm capable of doing, which is quite all right because I'm confident in what I can do. Putting me to the test gives me more of a rush. That's what led to the CROW sequel."

Cast as Kali in *THE CROW: CITY OF ANGELS*, Trang's femme fatale abets in the execution of the heroic Ashe, who's resurrected as the avenging Crow. Kali philosophizes that murder extricates mortals from their earthly shell; hence, they can find solace on the other side.

"When I read the script I thought, 'Oh my gosh! This character is so interesting,'" exclaims Trang. "She is so dark and so much more mature. There is so much more life and background for this character compared to Trini, the high school kid I played in *POWER RANGERS*. It was like a 180-degree turn."

Initially, Kali's final con-

THUY TRANG

"THE POWER RANGERS was a help and a hindrance. It's like I'm a ghost; I have power to move things but people can't see who's doing it. I'm fighting for an Asian viewpoint in Hollywood."



CITY OF ANGELS. Trang savors Ashe's torment (Vincent Perez) unaware he'll be resurrected as the avenging Crow. The actress performed her own stunts.

frontation with Ashe had nothing to do with martial arts; however, Trang talked director Tim Pope into allowing her the liberty of performing as many of her own stunts as possible. "Tim was great," she enthuses. "He was very understanding, very giving. He gave me the freedom to do what I wanted to do. All the cast members were very giving. It was very pleasant. The only thing I had problems with were the night shoots. I'm usually in bed very early. I'm not like the normal Hollywood type, who goes out and parties and all that. For me, the whole night thing was hard getting used to."

Mental flashbacks of the late Brandon Lee, who lost his life in a freak stunt accident while filming the first *CROW*, permeated production of the sequel. "I'd be lying to say that I didn't think about it," admits Trang in regard to the tragedy. "It

was kind of eerie as we were shooting the movie. I kind of felt his presence. It was weird. I could sense that he was there with us, his spirit protecting us in a way. During the shoot, I felt some kind of security around the whole thing. I don't know what the others were feeling but, personally, I felt that he was protecting us because it happened to him and he didn't want it to happen to us. Brandon, James Dean and all these others who die young, it tells me that talent is something that won't let you wait. You have to use it while you can."

(Note: Consult this issue's Sofia Shinas profile, page 20, for a behind-the-scenes recollection of Brandon Lee as *THE CROW*.)

Trang would prefer to graduate beyond the confines of her physical prowess—although she wouldn't mind taking a few whacks at TV kickers Chuck Norris and

David Carradine. But Trang is more preoccupied with translating her talent into less action, and more of a comic or dramatic forum.

Nevertheless, Trang realizes that her toughest fight won't be staged on the back lot; it'll be waged in casting offices. She not only has to lose her "kid's show" legacy but exorcise the Tinseltown stereotype that routinely plagues Asian actresses. The corporate community immutably perceives Trang as the *Yellow Ranger*.

"If Hollywood would just open its eyes and mind, and accept reality," she growls. "Then it will help create more of an acknowledgement—within the public—of what is going on, rather than just showing the Caucasian point of view all the time. That's why our generation and future generations are going to be so close-minded; the media is not showing reality. Hollywood is responsible for all the media that is put out, not just in America but internationally. Why not make a statement rather than just being shut into one thing?"

"POWER RANGERS is great," Trang continues. "I'm the first Asian hero that not only Asian kids can look up to, but Caucasian kids, black kids—all the kids can enjoy. They all say things like, 'I've always viewed Asians this way, but you're so cool!' In a way, *THE POWER RANGERS* breaks barriers, and that's one reason why it's so successful. It's not just focused on the Caucasian view, it's black, white, Asian working together, fighting evil. That kind of view is an advantage to everyone who is blinded by what the media puts out there."

"We should all be responsible for what we're doing on TV, in films and publications. Each one of us has to take responsibility for reality, and present it so that kids will grow up familiar with that and say, 'Okay. I know that. I've seen that before. I'm not afraid of it. That's cool.'"



Stacey Linder, national spokesperson for Miller Lite and Dewar's Scotch, is intoxicating as a vamp.

FATALE ATTRACTIONS

continued from 6
has a supporting role in the film, and that's good enough for us

●Stacey Linder's pin-up (FF 5:5, page 7) has generated a ton o'mail. Readers wanna know the latest developments in her career. Okay: Linder's debut film, *GAME OF PLEASURE*, is scheduled for a fall release. Her next movie, directed by Bruce G. Hallenbeck, is a "sensuous vampire yarn" titled *CARMILLA*. Between films, Linder posed for *Playboy's Book of Lingerie* and she's included among the "narrowed-down" list of applicants for Venus' International Model Search. Finally, by the time you read this, it's likely that Linder will be rendered into a comic book heroine. Next time!

●Cable from Dan Scapperotti: The Tsunamis (i.e. tidal wave) of "erotic anime" continues to pound video shelves. The latest is the politically incorrect *LE BLUE GIRL*, a 6-volume set from Central Park Media. Miko Mido, the sex-

bent-for-leather heroine, stands between our tangle planet and a sex-starved, demonic colony identified as the Shikuma. Along with Nin-Nun, her diminutive ninja sidekick, Miko is the target of a rival clan that's obsessed with usurping the malignant underworld's power. A comic book adaptation is available from Bare Bear Press. Parents should be cautioned that the explicit nature of the sex and vio—I'm stuck with only 3 more lines for this plug, so let's put it this way; *LE BLUE GIRL*—she ain't exactly Snow White

ATHENA MASSEY

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grow into his feet," she growled. "I was 'Rover.' The boys used to bark at me and make me cry. It was me and 'butt-faced Buffy,' we were the two ugliest girls in the entire school. When I liked a boy, I would beat him up."

"From the looks of your movies, things haven't changed much," I teased. "Maybe that's why I'm still single," she laughed.

I asked her to identify who she was dating, but she denied having a suitor, and seems uninterested in the subject. Sorry guys, Massey is married to her career.

Make no mistake about it, Massey is sick of the perception that she's eye candy. She invested plenty of research into her decidedly unglamorous role as *THE UNSPEAKABLE*'s homicide detective: "First I went to the director's agency and watched all his [Howard Mc Kain] reels, then I worked with an acting coach on the entire script, then I interviewed detectives on the Beverly Hills police force. Unfortunately I wasn't

able to interview female detectives." And for good reason; there was only one woman on the force.

It's finally happening. Athena Massey is drawing more than wolf whistles and predatory gazes. She's earning respect—which is the Hollywood idiom for roles uncluttered with T&A.

MARS ATTACKS

continued from 4

to this genre, including Jack Nicholson, Pierce Brosnan, Danny DeVito and Rod Steiger. It's a fun story that especially lends itself to the film's actresses playing over the top. Many of them have worked with Burton before.

Zimmerman deflects comparisons to *INDEPENDENCE DAY*: "No, *MARS ATTACKS* is a different type of movie. It's very character-driven; individual lives are affected by the alien invasion. And there's a wide range of female characters. Annette Bening, as the intoxicated, New Age wife of a real estate hustler [Nicholson], is strong. Glenn Close, as a First Lady more interested in redecorating the White House than the impending apocalypse, is equally strong—but cold. Actually, Pam Grier (*FF* 5:2), as the estranged wife of an ex-boxer [Jim Brown] is a good counterpoint, she's one of the more stable, down-to-earth characters.

"Given her past comedy experience, Sarah Jessica Parker brings the proper attitude to Nathalie, who's a reporter. Sarah combines media savvy and 'ditsiness.' The bottom line: she's credible."

Parker, who validated her comic aptitude in the likes of *L.A. STORY*, *HONEYMOON IN VEGAS* and, more recent-

ly, *THE FIRST WIVES CLUB*, notes her character "has an aesthetic sort of sensibility that seems to jive with what is trendy and fashionable. I would absolutely not call her a serious journalist, she probably doesn't have an inordinate amount of talent. Subscribing to anything that's vogue, she's actually one of the more common people that I've ever played. There's nothing really odd about her."

There's been serious speculation about the film's MPAA rating. In the event that the film matches the unbridled carnage of the *Topps* cards, an X-rating is certain. Another option: Not unlike *JURASSIC PARK*'s translation to film, the source's surplus "blood hemorrhaging" may be subdued or trimmed. Result, a more commercial R or PG-13. "I can't comment on the rating," says Zimmerman. "I've heard too many conflicting reports, and they get in the way of the fun."

Ms. Parker reveals one sample of blood-letting: "Michael J. Fox plays my character's boyfriend. In one scene, just as he and I are reaching for one another, Michael explodes. I'm left with his hand in my hand, literally, all I'm left with is Michael's hand. The rest of him has vanished! Then the martians take me and [pauses]—I don't wanna tell you the rest. You have to leave something." Pressed to elaborate on the fate of her character, Parker will only disclose, "She sort of survives. I mean—I guess it's a means, it's a way, it's survival of sorts. But it's not the way I would choose to survive."

Unlike the jingoistic spirit that prevails in *ID4*, will *MARS ATTACKS* be shaded by a darker, more cynical motif? "Definitely not darker," says Zimmerman. "There's a lot of satire, but that doesn't mean cynical. It's black comedy."

Ms. Parker's summation of the film? "I'd say it's science fiction with a dash of humor and peppered with silliness."

Perhaps anticipating a crossover from the movie, Image Comics is merging with *Topps* for a 4-issue *Mars Attacks* spin-off series titled *The Savage Dragon*, "Pamela Hawley, an art thief, is kidnapped by the martians," explains Zimmerman. "She

MARS ATTACKS! Martian pillage is no match for a Vegas mugging, uncredited showgirl, Tom Jones, director Tim Burton, Annette Bening and Jim Brown.



winds up being Dragon's partner." The Topps comics are recurrently compelled by alien abductions; "female specimens" are subjected to biological experimentation. But Zimmerman vows a female vendetta is imminent: "Women are fed up with martian atrocities, and they want revenge. This theme will be a major subplot of the *Mars Attacks!* comics. Women are going to say, 'Goddamn it, we can't take it anymore!' Expect women to be very powerful players in the conflict." □

LETTERS

continued from page 43
doesn't alter the fact that Weigel is a talented, creative, intelligent, strong woman who could validate her acting skills—in a mainstream movie—if only hypocritical Hollywood would give her the opportunity.

Hollywood is quick to give its pre-scripted defense to Bill Clinton's alleged affairs and his top aides' addiction to drugs and prostitutes. The routine refrain is "Don't judge a person on their past." But Hollywood refuses to pardon Ms. Weigel, and her only "sin" was performing in adult movies! Is it because Ms. Weigel is neither powerful nor influential enough for Hollywood to enforce her rescue? *Shame* on Hollywood for picking and choosing whom they feel deserves equal rights—and who doesn't.

I believe Teri Weigel is Wonder Woman...she has already embodied the spirit, soul and heart of the character, and no one can take that away from her. I challenge Hollywood to make the right choice and offer Weigel the same unbiasedness that they've lavished upon Clinton.

Paul Goldfarb
South, MI

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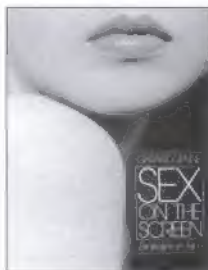
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FUDGING "SCI-FI'S SEXY 50" (5-3)-FINAL CHAPTER

How did you manage to list the 50 sexiest women in science fiction without mentioning Sybil Danning? Do you actually believe all 50 of those actresses are sexier than Sybil?

Also, how did Pocahontas qualify for a list of animated characters related to science fiction? Well, at least she bumped the skeletal Aeon Flux.

Robert Becker
Northford, CT

I very much enjoyed your September issue, featuring the "50 Sexiest Figures in Science Fiction." However, I must protest against the non-appearance of Erin Gray (BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25TH CENTURY). I feel Ms. Gray has all the necessary qualifications for an appearance in such a listing.

Any chance you could correct this omission in a future issue?

David T. Bradley
Rotherham, England

I was really surprised—grievously disappointed!—by the omission of Barbara Leigh (FF cover woman, 4:3) and J.J. North (FF cover woman, 3:3 & 4:7) from the 50 Sexiest list.

Though she originally slipped into the Vampirella costume in the 70's, Barbara looks equally fantastic today. You didn't even include her on your sidebar list of the Sexiest from the 70's!

I'm still trying to figure out how you could have excluded J.J. from your list! She should have been near the top!

Brinke Stevens, a lady who defines what an actress should be, should have ranked higher. She's not only professional but civilly, and warmly, acknowledges her fans.

Joseph D. Casey
Tampa, Florida

I have nothing against Teri Hatcher or Elvira, or any of the other ladies who were singled-out as the Top 50. But Manon Kelley—who was somehow denied qualification—makes all 50 look like the "Little Women"! Matter of fact, Manon Kelley has so much sex appeal, she could

share some of it with all 50 actresses and still have plenty left over!

Adding insult to injury, you didn't include J.J. North, Nikki Fritz or Tammy Parks on the list!

Kerry Johnson
New Roads, LA

Overall, I enjoyed your 50 Sexiest (Sci-Fi) Women list. But, amazingly, STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION's Gates McFadden ("Dr. Beverly Crusher") wasn't included! This came as a complete surprise! Not only is she a very beautiful woman but, over the seven year run of TNG, we've seen Crusher become a truly rich and complex character. Sample her performances, during TNG's later years, in such great episodes as "The High Ground," "Remember Me," "The Host," "Attached," "Sub Rosa" and "All Good Things." She also made history by becoming the first STAR TREK woman to direct an episode (TNG's "Genesis").

Rob Kirchgassner
Cincinnati, OH

We consider it careless and reprehensible that the following actresses were expunged from the Sci-Fi's Top 50: Jami Gertz, Beverly D'Angelo, Meg Tilly, Mathilda May, Stephanie Beacham, Athena Massey, Isabella Rossellini, Rosalind Allen, Linda Fiorentino and Vivian Schilling. They're devoid of surgical embellishments; they are, however, endowed with a sensitivity and a sagacity that matches their sultriness. C'mon guys—they're *femmes fatales*.

Sophie Blake & Maria Lax
Washington, D.C.

P.S. Two more contenders: Lisa Zane & Suzanne Snyder, both of whom were cast in 1990's FEMME FATALE. Snyder's cult film is the underrated KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE.

VAMPIRELLA

It seems to me that the costume design for the Roger Corman version of VAMPIRELLA (FF 5:5) was off the mark from the start. I'm familiar with



Readers protest the omission of Suzanne Snyder (KILLER KLOWNS) from "50 Sexiest."

both the Warren and Harris translations of Vampirella, and neither would wear vinyl: the reason she wore her Drakulon monokini—and she would occasionally think this to herself—was that it was more comfortable than Earth clothing.

If they wanted a brief costume that looked like the comic book version—but more practical—why not take a scarlet sports bra and bikini bottom, and add the white collar, gold brooch and gold bat applique of the comic book costume? Tell the lawyers of anyone who might want to do a second VAMPIRELLA movie that they don't have to pay me for maybe the ten minutes it took me to come up with that design. (The comic book character sometimes wears a large brooch—sometimes all gold, and sometimes with an emerald to go with her eyes. No black bat or dark fingernails, though; she doesn't see herself as evil. "Primitive" gold jewelry and black boots—sometimes flat-heeled, sometimes thigh-high—finish off her basic outfit.)

I suspect that the problem is that to the pure, everything is pure—and to the folks in Hollywood, everything is cheap and sleazy. The comic

book *Vampirella* was neither a libertine nor a "progressive" liberal, but a noble savage; her outfit was high-tech primitive, not Weimar decadent.

Don Schenk
Allentown, PA

SALUTE CLINTON, STONE THE FORMER X-STARLET

I am writing to express my complete disappointment in Hollywood's hypocritical sense of fairness and equality. It is such an embarrassment to have the Hollywood community preaching about how everyone deserves an equal chance at job opportunities—without scrutinizing their private life or past history. But Tinseltown changes its collective tune when it comes to one of their own...

I'm referring to the fact that Ms. Teri Weigel—the perfect choice to be cast as Wonder Woman in the upcoming film—has been denied the chance to audition as a result of Hollywood's partiality; Weigel has been decreed guilty because of her adult film career. So she did some X-rated films...SO WHAT? WHO CARES? That doesn't alter the fact that she looks identical to the comic book renderings of Wonder Woman. And it

continued from page 61

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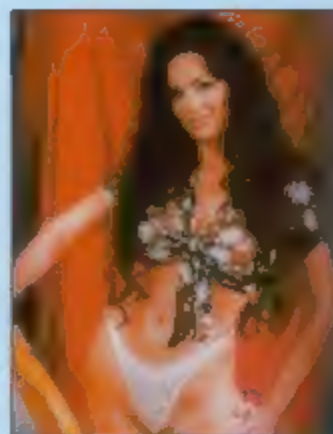
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Volume 4 Number 4
An updated chronicle featuring Elvira, the movie sequel, TV pilot and her feud with Milla Nurmi (Vampire). Also in this issue, Nicole Kidman talks about her role in TO DIE FOR, Julie Strain on HEAVY METAL II, plus Janet Leigh—one of Hitchcock's best known femmes—talks about PSYCHO and some of her less famous roles. \$8.00



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Featuring the career of '50s movie star Jeanine Carmen both on and off-screen, Michelle Bauer gives her final FF interview. Gail Harris goes from movie bombshell to sci-fi film producer, and Brinke Stevens turns stripper in the Big Dipper. Plus ex-Swedish Bikini Teamster Peggy Trentini, and Tura Satana from FASTER, PUSSYCATT KILL! KILL! \$8.00



Volume 4 Number 3
"The Vamp," Barbara Leigh reveals her provocative lifestyle; all about Julie Strain's past, and Stella Stevens chronicles her stellar career. Also, the untamed and uninhibited Shauna O'Brien; the varied career of British Bombshell Valerie Leon, and filming daytime femmes for THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL. \$8.00



Volume 4 Number 5
This issue features the femmes fatales of James Bond films, chronicling nearly 30 years of spies 'n' thighs; from early vixens to modern vanquishers, featuring interviews with 007 seductress Famke Janssen of GOLDENEYE, and the sultry Talisa Soto from LICENSE TO KILL. Also featured are the women of WITCHCRAFT. \$8.00

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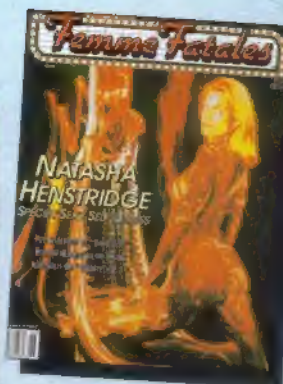
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In our second issue meet Sybil Danning, the "big lady of action and exploitation cinema", plus Joe Bob Briggs, the professor of pop culture, picks his Scream Queen top ten. The star of **GHOST STORY** and **SLEEPWALKERS**, Alice Krige, is interviewed along with Elvira, Sharon Stone, Caroline Munro and Julie Strain. \$10.00



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Michelle Pfeiffer, the femme fatale of **BATMAN RETURNS**, is the star of our third issue. Read about her experience playing the Catwoman. Also Elvira traces her career from TV's hottest horror hostess to a possible future as a sitcom star. Interviews with the brides of **DRACULA**, Kathy Ireland, and Suzanne Ager—Live! \$10.00



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A past imperfect label has been imposed on her early work, but Traci Lords lifted herself into the mainstream. She peels in **SKIN-NEB**—but not her clothes. Also **BABYLON 5** stars, Blake Baron, Patricia Tallman and Tamlyn Tomita explore the woman's world of sci-fi television. Plus Dee Wallace Stone and Raquel Welch. \$8.00



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This incredible Collector's Cover which was never sold on newsstands, features the beautiful and talented actress Natasha Henstridge, who plays the shape-shifting Sil of **SPECIES**. Also, Pamela Anderson Lee's **BAYWATCH** alter-ego surfaces in **BARB WIRE**, the Dark Horse comics screen adaptation. \$8.00



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The women of **DINOSAUR ISLAND** are featured as well as Sheena Easton, Monique Gabrielle's true confessions, Betsy Russell and the B-movie start to the career of sitcom mom Beverly Garland. Also includes interviews with Julie Michaels, Julia Paron and Temptresses from the Crypt. \$8.00



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